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CHAMPLAIN DISCOVERS THE LAKE

LA PRESENTATION

JOHNSON HALL 1762

BATTLE OF SARATOGA 1777

JAM H. SEWARD


MARTIN VAN BUREN

GEORGE CLINTON

FUGITIVE







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HISTORY OF THE STATE OF  
NEW YORK

IN TEN VOLUMES

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EDITED BY  
ALEXANDER C. FLICK  
STATE HISTORIAN

PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF  
THE NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION







*Mr. Van Buren*

# HISTORY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK



VOLUME SIX  
THE AGE OF REFORM

NEW YORK

M·CM·XXXIV

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## FOREWORD

BY the middle of the nineteenth century New York had attained a maturity and preëminence among sister states that justified its designation as the Empire State. Geographic boundaries had been fixed and the pattern of local government had been determined. New York had become the most populous state in the Union. The value of agricultural products exceeded a hundred million dollars and manufactured articles did not fall far below that sum. A primacy in transportation and communication tapped the resources of the West and made New York City the beneficiary as the ranking port on the Atlantic with its exports and imports far ahead of any rival. In wealth New York held first place and possessed about fifteen percent of that of the entire nation.

It is important to observe that New York's leadership was not restricted to material progress but was also conspicuous in reforms which resulted in a broadened social and cultural outlook and development. Both noticeable and notable were the better homes, a higher standard of living, improved schools and colleges, superior institutions for the unfortunate, an enlightened press, added libraries, and the growth of a more intelligent appreciation of literature, music and art.

As both cause and result of this transformation in civilization was the growth of a belief in the efficacy of democratic government. Inherited from the transformation of the War for Independence, this idea found embodiment in the Constitutions of 1821 and 1846. Political institutions were liberalized, male franchise was established, the doctrine of equal privilege became fundamental law, the election of local and state officials by the people was extended, and a government by the citizens of the state was created. This triumph of democ-

racy is clearly interpreted through the processes of its realization by 1850.

Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox in Chapter I, "New York Becomes a Democracy," both indicates the problem clearly and explains how it was solved. As an example of interpretative history, this contribution sets a high standard in a neglected phase of the history of the state. Supplementing Dr. Fox's introductory discussion, Mr. Denis Tilden Lynch in two informing chapters traces the growth and struggles of political parties through a labyrinth of changes for a period of three-fourths of a century. Professor Dexter Perkins in Chapter IV clarifies New York's conspicuous participation in the Federal government and in the solution of national questions of the era.

A vivid picture of the development of the railroad system in the Empire State following 1826, together with its industrial, social and political consequences, is presented in Mr. Edward Hungerford's two meaty chapters which round out a lamentable deficiency in the history of transportation. Dependent for marked success upon the steam locomotive for quick, cheap, and reliable transport, was the factory so ably described for the first time in Chapter VII on "The Rise of the Factory System" by Professor Harry J. Carman and Mr. August Baer Gold. Included in the survey are textiles, metallurgical industries, leather goods, lumbering, and shipbuilding. The new problems of both the workers and the industrialists are set forth in some particularity.

The conspicuous reform movements of the period, such as those touching slavery, peace, woman suffrage, temperance, and secret societies are presented in Chapter VIII from the investigations of Professor W. Freeman Galpin. Another sadly needed reform, namely, the correction of the evils inherited from the colonial system of land ownership and use, is discussed in an authoritative manner by Professor Edward P. Cheyney in

his chapter on "The Antirent Movement and the Constitution of 1846."

Quite appropriately the final chapter in this volume by Dr. James G. Riggs and Principal Ralph M. Faust is a well-written summary of the growth of New York up to 1850 in population, agriculture, transportation, trade, wealth, social and cultural changes, and political institutions which established its recognized hegemony as the Empire State.

ALEXANDER C. FLICK

ALBANY, NEW YORK  
April 17, 1934



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# NEW YORK BECOMES A DEMOCRACY

DIXON RYAN FOX

*Professor of History  
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## NEW YORK BECOMES A DEMOCRACY

THE museum visitor is often fascinated by eighteenth-century views wherein the painter's brush has pictured scenes now greatly changed, old quiet scenes of shadowed rivulets and grazing herds and winding lanes where now one sees the crowded traffic of broad motor roads and railway tracks and the towers of commerce rising from the human swarm to pierce gray clouds of factory smoke. Could the minds of men be visualized in these two eras, their social ideals and philosophy, the contrast would be as sharp and striking. The changing means and methods of work and travel have accounted for this contrast, in some part, and particularly the changing means of carrying ideas from one mind to another. Living, as we do, in an age when knowledge of the world is not only freely offered to the citizen but forced upon him by the public school, the cheap press, the radio and the motion picture; when the accessories of life, including costume, are turned out by machines on standard patterns; when a fluid society is constantly reclassified by new wealth and prestige, generally earned by competence, it is difficult for us to realize the caste lines which seemed so permanently drawn two centuries ago, when, as someone has put it, a man might devoutly pray that

God bless the squire and his relations  
And keep us all in our proper stations.

### THE NEW ISSUE OF DEMOCRACY

It is true that the New-World colonies were peopled largely by one class, the middle class of yeomen and tradespeople, neither the best off nor the worst. But few came here out of zeal for democracy as a form of government; each, for the most

part, was determined to rise in the freer opportunity, so that he, or at least his children, might hold a station in the social scheme higher than he had had to be content with in old Europe. Some were disappointed, and these joined the Revolution without much concern for constitutional disputation, vaguely hoping that an overturn might better their condition. In no colony did all the people, or all the adult males, participate in government, and in many it was but a meager fraction who held this privilege and fewer still who exercised it. The Revolution was not generally a democratic movement, but a movement of nationalism, a movement for community independence. The Continental Congress, desiring to enlarge its basis and to enlist every discontent it could, in the spring and summer of 1776 advised the new states to extend the suffrage, but few went far in this direction. They emerged from the successful struggle with political restrictions not greatly different from those which they had imposed as colonies.

As Doctor Spaulding has stated elsewhere in this *History*, not more than 6 per cent of the population of New York could show the necessary £100, or \$250, in real property, to qualify their vote for governor, lieutenant governor and senators; and though three times as many might vote for members of Assembly, meeting the much easier test of \$50, so accustomed were they to leave government to a class that in some counties not more than one in six of these who had this humbler privilege took the trouble to exercise it. Even after 1800 and in counties where real property was most evenly distributed, like Oneida, scarcely half the adult males enjoyed full suffrage. At the end of the eighteenth century, then, New York was far from being a political democracy.

The party battles of that era are traced elsewhere, but it is appropriate here to say that, for the first half century in the history of the state, whether or not democracy was desirable

and practicable was the question uppermost in nearly every party contest. There were personal followings and shifting factions and regroupings, but it is this which gives real meaning to party annals. In no long-continued period before or since has there been so definite a philosophical alignment in the politics of the state, the Federalists and later the Clintonians arguing on the one side and the Republicans or Democrats arguing, and successfully, upon the other. In the 1790s, the Federalist theory was favored by the majority of voters, as judged by the three elections for governor held within that decade, though in the first, that of 1792, the majority was tricked out of its victory by its opponents. It is important, therefore, to examine that theory as represented by its party leaders.

### THE CONSERVATIVES

The great captain of Federalism was Alexander Hamilton. In his view, government existed to protect not only life but especially property; indeed, it should busy itself in every possible way to develop national power through national wealth. Only a fraction of humanity was competent to build up this wealth. That government was strongest which had wealth behind it and that government was best which best provided incentive, opportunity and security for those who could accumulate and administer wealth. Agriculture was a simple process and could be left to itself in the broad lands of America, but business must be actively encouraged. At any rate, it was the men of property, men who had shown ability to make and keep it, who had the chief stake in government, and to them it should be intrusted. He had no belief in the equal distribution of intelligence and ability. "Your public," he burst out on one occasion, "is a great beast." Governor Jay, as he became in 1795, was wholly sympathetic with these views.

It is not a new remark [he wrote] that those who own the country are the most fit persons to participate in the government of it. This remark, with certain restrictions and exceptions, has force in it; and applies both to the elected and to the elector, though with most force to the former.

A high-minded chief executive, he was criticized only for spending the public money too rapidly, for making the government too active, which to his adherents seemed more a virtue than a fault. With these stood Rufus King, lately come from Massachusetts. Like them, he had the manner as well as the mental outlook of the old ruling class, preserving its formal courtesy and, long after it had generally disappeared, the old costume of prestige and dignity, silk stockings and silver buckles, small clothes and lace. Completing the great quartet of Federalist leaders was Gouverneur Morris, in whose opinion "there never was and never will be a civilized society without an aristocracy."

Behind these distinguished champions of the old régime stood the ablest lawyers of the state, with the exception of Aaron Burr, who organized his personal support wherever he could, without regard to political philosophy, and the Livingstons, most of whom in the early nineties crossed to Jefferson's interest, apparently in pique because the new Federal administration had neglected them. The lawyers formed a numerous order—President Dwight, of Yale, estimated that there were more than twice as many in New York as in Connecticut for each thousand of population—and their aristocratic tendencies were resented by the popular party.

Beware of lawyers [warned the *New York Daily Advertiser*, on March 4, 1789]. Of the men who framed the monarchical, aristocratical, oligarchical, tyrannical, diabolical system of slavery, the *New Constitution*, one Half were lawyers. Of the men who represented, or rather misrepresented, this city and country in the late convention



of this state, to whose wicked arts we may chiefly attribute the adoption of the abominable system, seven out of nine were lawyers.

Old Tory lawyers in the city, men like Richard Harison, Josiah Ogden Hoffman and Cadwallader D. Colden, found the principles of Hamilton and Jay the best now practicable, and were welcomed to the party by conservative Whigs in the profession—Col. Robert Troup, now a powerful land agent in the Genesee country and one who did “not admire . . . the republican system”; Col. Richard Varick, the high-toned and austere mayor of New York for many years; Egbert Benson, the state’s first attorney general, John Wells, the Lawrences, the Ogdens, and others. And bracketed with them were the great merchants, almost to a man. Much the same could be written of Albany, Poughkeepsie, Hudson, Kingston, Troy and other towns.

The upstate squires, Dutch and English, held the same creed, following their high model, the benevolent patroon, Stephen Van Rensselaer, the richest landlord in America, presiding over his two thousand tenants. Even in the forest, aristocracy still penetrated here and there as it had in colonial days. Wild land remained, along with ships and cargoes, a favorite hope of riches. As one glances down the pages of the *Calendar of Land Papers*, one sees virtually all the old aristocratic New York names, the Bayards, the Duers, the Duanes, the Coldens, the Jays, the Lows, the Fishes, and the rest. Consider, for example, Saint Lawrence County, formed in 1802, almost the farthest and least accessible from New York City. Here great tracts were held by John Delafield, Nicholas Low, Josiah Ogden Hoffman, Frederic de Peyster, Philip Brasher, Garrett Van Horne, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Richard Harison, Philip Schuyler, David M. Clarkson, and, greatest in the area of his holding, Gouverneur Morris. Few speculators had the luck of Senator Robert Morris in the western counties to wholesale their hold-

ings in million-acre parcels; it was necessary for Saint Lawrence proprietors to sell, if they could sell at all, to actual settlers. They sent promising young friends into the wilderness as land agents to bargain with these pioneers; they advised their law clerks to try the opportunities of the new country; and then, inspired by the tradition of solid county families in old England, induced their younger sons to take their wives and children, their libraries, mahogany and silver plate, into the woodland and build stately manor houses along with shrines of the Episcopal Church. Of this outpost gentry the Ogdens, the Clarksons, the Harisons, the Parishes and the Van Rensselaers long remained examples, as did scores of similar families elsewhere, all holding fortresses to stay the onrush of democracy across the new lands of New York. Most of these counts of the marches came from New York City, but, among the most famous, William Cooper, of Cooperstown, migrated from New Jersey and the Wadsworths, of Geneseo, from Connecticut.

Meantime the forces of democracy were everywhere advancing, favored by every circumstance of the time and place. Abroad it was an age of leveling change. The fires of liberty, equality and fraternity, flaming first in Paris, were burning the pillars of privilege all through western Europe. Many who fanned these flames professed to find their ideal in the simplicities of American society, but myriads on this side of the Atlantic, excited by French creeds and programs, protested that America was not yet fit to be the model of the new dispensation, and heartily resolved to make it so. Democratic societies were formed not only in New York City, but in little villages like Canaan, in Columbia, and Montgomery, in Ulster County. Aaron Burr easily captured the Tammany Society for the new principles. Party newspapers preached the doctrine through the state and orators proclaimed it.

The tradition of aristocratic rule in the manner of England

was stronger in New York than in the other northern states, but in one respect the struggle for democracy was less bitter here than in the region to the east. In the chief New England states at the beginning of the nineteenth century, an established church was part of the standing order and dependent for its privileges upon political restrictions. No such establishment had ever been completely accepted in any part of New York, despite attempts to make it so, and since the Revolution there was no vestige of it. Doctor Dwight, used to clerical control in New England, believed that religion in New York was starved by want of political support, but New Yorkers jealously defended their religious liberty against any possible encroachment. When Governor Jay proclaimed an annual Thanksgiving Day it roused suspicious opposition, and it remained for the days of De Witt Clinton after 1817, when democracy had little need of apprehension, to establish this observance. It would be extravagant to say that any large proportion of democratic reformers were anticlerical, but it is certain that the militant deists, such as those who, under Elihu Palmer and Thomas Paine, made New York City the principal center of the cult in America, and those who organized the Society of Ancient Druids in Newburgh and set dogs on clergymen, were, while their influence persisted for a dozen years after the middle nineties, a strong force against class rule. Certain clergymen like the Reverend William Linn, an outstanding figure in the Dutch Reformed Church, at first applauded the democratic tendencies of the French Revolution; but by 1800 most of these had come over to the safer company of the reverend faculties of Columbia and Union Colleges and the village clergy of the river towns, as upholders of political conservatism. Only among the Baptist leaders, like the famous itinerant Jedediah Peck, of Otsego County, was democracy cherished through this age as an ideal.

The Jeffersonian victory in 1800, due in part to the shrewd finesse of Aaron Burr in New York City, but more largely to the increase of pioneer farmers, warned the Federalists of their diminishing power. Continued disappointment lay before them and they were never afterward of and by themselves to regain complete control of the state. Hamilton, impressed with the effectiveness of Burr's Tammany Society, advised a similar organization to keep conservatism tolerable to the lower classes by preaching fraternity as a substitute for equality. But it was not till 1808, in the encouragement that came with the unpopularity of Jefferson's embargo, that Isaac Sebring, a New York merchant, Richard Varick and young Gulian C. Verplanck organized the Washington Benevolent Society to serve this purpose, with addresses pointing to the charm of old conservative principles, with banners and parades, a secret ritual and solemn pledges to protect the country against political innovations, including democracy. It spread to every considerable town in the state and far beyond, becoming especially popular in New England during the War of 1812, reaching scores of thousands and then, wilting rapidly, was virtually dead by 1820.

But the conservatives relied on more than sentiment; they well illustrated that chicanery could flourish under a restricted suffrage as well as in the pure democracy of later days. Landlords here and there bribed their tenants to accept a deed for their holdings covering the three days of election only and, thus qualified, to vote according to directions. Young Martin Van Buren found his aristocratic opponents in Columbia County very proficient in this practice; he knew one landlord who had thus "made" 190 Federalist voters. "I am sorry for Columbia," he reported to his chief, "but have done all I could—King George has issued too many pattents for us." The Republicans, holding the legislature in 1811, determined to cut

off the landlords' opportunities and, against stout opposition, passed a law calling upon each voter for governor to swear that he had not become a "freeholder fraudulently, for the purpose of giving my vote at this election, nor upon any trust or understanding, express or implied, to reconvey such free-hold during or after election." Voters for Assembly, and therefore for Congress, had to take oath that they had held their fifty dollars' worth of landed property for six months preceding the election; it was thought that no landlord would forfeit a half year's rental for a vote.

One important step in the progress of democracy, social and political, was taken in the law of 1779, which provided for the gradual abolition of slavery, referred to in a previous volume. In 1818, another law designated July 4, 1827, as the date of emancipation for all slaves, of whatever age, in the state, a day celebrated long afterward by the Negro population. But long anticipating these final measures, individual manumission had proceeded rapidly and a considerable fraction of the Negroes were free at the beginning of the War of 1812. A European following this trend would have expected it to forward political democracy, but such was not the case. It must be remembered that though most of the slaves were owned by the Federalists, the party of wealth, it had been their leaders, Jay and Hamilton, who had successively presided over the Manumission Society; Gouverneur Morris had, along with Jay, striven in vain for emancipation in the Revolutionary constitution, and Rufus King had been chiefly responsible for excluding slavery from the Northwest. It had been a Federalist legislature and a Federalist governor who had put through the law of 1799, almost by a straight party vote. The fact is that slavery did not pay in New York, and the Federalists felt no economic brake upon their benevolent instincts. It was the artisans, fearing the free Negro as a competitor, who opposed

his liberty. The free Negro, when by gift or earnings he met the property qualification as a voter, was not a menace to conservative principles. Slavery had been in New York a personal relationship—very few masters even before the Revolution had held more than five slaves—and a relationship generally of mutual good will. In consequence the colored voter remained a client of his former master and voted for his ticket. In the hotly-fought contest of 1813, it was charged that the votes of Negroes massed in doubtful wards in New York City and Brooklyn had made possible the Federalist capture of the Assembly. Their opponents watched the colored voter with a suspicious eye and put every possible obstacle in his path.

### THE MOVEMENT FOR REFORM

But by neither argument nor cunning could the Federalists stem the rising tide of democracy. In the thirty years which followed the first census, New York quadrupled in population—grew greater by a million—but four-fifths of this gain had come in the western and northern counties, where an insufficient equity in land excluded a majority of the adult males from the franchise, and where on the great Holland Company, Pulteney, and Macomb purchases many titles did not pass on estates, however extensive, until the final payment. Most of the other gain came in the landless mill hands of manufacturing towns, of growing importance, especially since 1807; or in other city workers living in small rented lodgings. Naturally these new classes clamored for extension of the suffrage.

There were other constitutional reforms demanded, notably the abolition of the Council of Appointment. Upon this, all disinterested men agreed. In all the eighteenth-century provinces, the executive had represented outside authority, frequently in conflict with American will. Remembering their

long-drawn controversies with the governors, the Revolutionary architects of government grudged authority to the executive, the old agency of tyranny. The governor must not be permitted to build up an "interest" through appointments. In most states this power was entirely denied him; in New York he was, in this function, merged in a council with four colleagues, each a senator chosen annually by the Assembly from one of the quarter districts of the state. For a time, the chief executive assumed to nominate with the consent of his fellow members, but in the early nineties the opposition insisted that Governor George Clinton's vote weighed no more than that of any other. Under Governor Jay, the Republicans, now themselves the opposition, made the same claims and, by calling a special constitutional convention in 1801, made possible through their majority in the legislature, wrote their interpretation into the fundamental law. By 1818, this body, selected as always on strictest party lines, dispensed some fifteen thousand offices, civil and military, worth in fees and salaries more than a million dollars. Often obscure men, raised to transient power by a chance majority in the Assembly and flattered by a horde of office seekers, they met behind closed doors and voted, usually without a record of yeas and nays. "If the ingenuity of man," a governor admitted in a later message, "had been exercised to organize the appointing power in such a way as to produce continued intrigue and commotion in the state, none could have been devised with more effect than the present arrangement." The system cried for reform. The politicians with some reluctance joined in the demand, but neither Governor DeWitt Clinton nor his chief adversary Martin Van Buren desired that the credit for improvement should go to the other.

In February, 1818, Ogden Edwards, of the Tammany Society, introduced a resolution in the legislature calling for a constitu-

tional convention to provide a new scheme for appointment. Governor Clinton, hoping to control the council soon to be selected, against the advice of prudent friends refused to sanction the proposal. Gen. Erastus Root, nothing daunted by this rebuff, then moved further to revise the fundamental law by amendments to extend the right of suffrage and to abolish the Council of Revision, the board made up of the governor, the chancellor and all the judges of the supreme court, to which the constitution had intrusted the veto power. The resolution could not be immediately carried, but it focused favorable propaganda through the state. Clinton, silent for a year, finally recommended a convention to consider the appointing power, but the Tammany men refused, now demanding more extensive reforms. They believed that with caution they could attract the naturalized immigrants, who would be qualified to vote by a new constitution, without losing the prosperous mechanics and shopkeepers.

The reelection of the governor in the spring of 1820 made it clear to his foes that his influence must be destroyed by some far-reaching means; at a meeting in Tammany Hall it was determined to strike for a constitutional convention, and the Democratic press took up the cry in all parts of the state. The governor notwithstanding, the reformers carried through a bill calling for the election of delegates to such a convention, with inclusive powers.

Clinton and the Federalists saw that a convention of some sort must be summoned; their next device had to be postponement. If they could but delay it for a year or two, the census of 1820 might be the basis for appointing delegates, and this would weight the influence of western counties, where Clinton, as the protagonist of the Grand Canal, could count on much support. In the elections which would intervene, their party might be able to win back the legislature, and then the bill might be



drawn to protect those features of the old fundamental law which were so esteemed by men of property. Most of all, they feared to lose the Council of Revision which the Democrats had destined for extinction. This body had been hated as the guardian of old Federalist principles. While Chancellor Kent, Chief Justice Ambrose Spencer, Jonas Platt and William W. Van Ness, as a majority, could veto any law, democracy might well complain. To save their power for a season, the Council now resolved to use it, and refused consent to the convention bill. It was necessary, they declared—somewhat fantastically, since there was little doubt as to the people's will—that the people should cast ballots to decide whether a convention should be called, suggesting a date after the publication of the coming census.

This was not the first time the Council had denied a popular demand. In 1809 they had disallowed a bill for setting off new districts in the state; in 1812 they had refused permission for the enlargement of the supreme court by a Democratic Council of Appointment. They had checked the "War Hawks" in their measures for conscription and the treatment of deserters. They had extended their protection to the Negro allies of the Federalists. The Council's temporary victory in 1820 but nerved the Democrats to fiercer resolution. Not only must the Council be abolished, but every one of these aristocrats in ermine must be driven from the bench.

Despite the Federalists' attempt to confine consideration to the Council of Appointment and their efforts at delay, the plans for a general convention moved rapidly forward. Their backs to the wall, the Federalists preached caution and conservatism. A Poughkeepsie address, for example, warned the state "that no alterations should be made except such as experience had made absolutely necessary, [and] that no wild plans of innovation ought to be indulged." "Fluctuation," solemnly

observed another, in the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, "in any form of government is a calamity." To save time, the Democrats accepted the proposal of a preliminary vote, but threw it open to all adult male taxpayers and militiamen. An overwhelming majority of more than 74,000 rebuked the Federalist obstructionists.

Quite as impressive was the vote for delegates. The suffrage issue was uppermost. "As honest poverty is no disgrace," wrote an essayist in the *Albany Argus*, "it ought to form no obstacle to the full enjoyment of our political rights." Some conservatives hoped a compromise might be worked out in the deliberations, but the returns showed how meager was the prospect of concession to old principles. The personal adherents of Governor Clinton elected but 3 delegates and their Federalist colleagues but 13, while the Democrats with 110 could carry their reforms to whatever lengths they might desire.

#### THE CONVENTION OF 1821

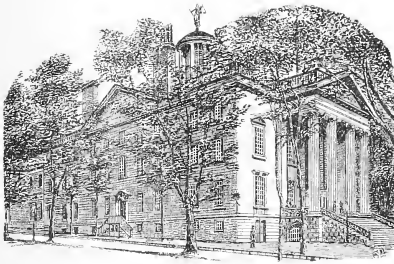
The convention, meeting on August 28 in the Assembly chamber of the capitol, proceeded to elect the "Farmer's Boy," Daniel D. Tompkins, then second officer of the United States, as its president. Escorted to his high seat opposite the doors, he could regard with satisfaction a body whose "towering majority," as the *Argus* boasted, "represented the interests, feelings and views of the friends of democratic government." In the end seat on his right was Col. Samuel Young, whom Tompkins in the late war had rewarded with a place upon his military staff in recognition of his trenchant satire on Federalist sedition. In the prime of middle life and inclined to radical reform, he could be counted on for telling blows against all institutions that did not square with the new philosophy. Two seats behind, there sat another stout reformer, Gen. Erastus Root, much more re-



*S. VanNesbelaes*



*Erastus Root*



*The Old Capitol*



*Samuel McKee*



*Rufus King.*

AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1821



nowned upon the field of politics as one who sought to break a lance with every champion of privilege. Forty-nine years old, he stood as yet unscarred by the dissipation that injured his good fame, and ready to take up the battle, in his gay and taunting way, for all revolutionary theories of politics or of religion. He would have graced the Mountain thirty years before in France. Behind him in the rear row and a little toward the center sat the third of this extraordinary trio, Peter R. Livingston, a philosophical democrat of considerable wealth, harsh and forceful in his utterance and steadfast in allegiance to the principles of Thomas Jefferson. These led the madcap democrats of whom Van Buren said, "They thought nothing wise that was not violent."

In front of Livingston was Ogden Edwards, who represented Tammany and the influences of restrained reform: with him the president, in looking through the rows, might naturally associate the venerable Rufus King, sitting but a few feet distant, now the moderate spokesman of the few "high-minded" Federalists, who, disliking Clinton, were coöperating with the Democrats. On the left side of the house, in an aisle seat near the front, sat King's colleague in the national Senate, Martin Van Buren, blond and smilingly benignant, whose soft words and subtle indirections had charmed his way to leadership. No obstruction of the enemy would escape his notice, yet no vain enthusiasm would betray him to intemperance in speech. Doubtless Tompkins realized that here, and not in the stately presidential chair, sat the man whose prudent hand would hold the Democratic delegates in firm control.

It was, as the president well understood, a delicate business. Although reforms might seem predestined by the June election, they would not be accomplished without meeting from the Federalists an opposition no less grim than skillful. As he looked upon that little company—less than a score of men, "commis-

sioned," as George Bancroft said in his *Van Buren*, "to impede the onward movement to a government of all men by all men" — he might well have suffered some misgivings; for their talent was far more impressive than their numbers. In knowledge of the law, of history and of institutions, they outmatched any group of equal size that could be furnished by the Democrats.

Midway down the right aisle sat the chancellor, in the ripeness of his eight and fifty years, short in stature, but so vivacious and alert that in all the room there was no man less likely to be overlooked. He had come resolved to dedicate his learning in political science, gleaned from tireless study of the ancient classics and the works of modern commentators, to the task of saving for posterity those principles and practices which had been tried and sanctified by time. The aptest pupil of Judge Egbert Benson, he had surpassed his master in determination to defend the old dominion of the wise and good. Three seats from Kent, looking toward the left, sat the patroon, younger by two years than the chancellor and more fine of feature. He was not accounted eloquent, but his probity and public spirit, universally acknowledged, might so weight his simple word as to outbalance the labored rhetoric of many an opponent.

In that same row, exactly in the center, towered the form of Chief Justice Ambrose Spencer, master of the law, somewhat supercilious in his deportment, and suspicious of political reformers. No man in the assemblage could cow this august person, and none there could convince him of an error in his logic; no man of small experience might safely challenge him in a debate. Sitting at his right was his associate upon the bench, William W. Van Ness, whose brilliant, penetrating mind and ready wit were famous; and beside Van Ness, his old friend, Elisha Williams, still "the most celebrated jury lawyer in the state and probably in the Union," inventive in conception, rounded and graceful in utterance, fertile and copious in dic-

tion, though now smirched in reputation and discounted by many of his hearers as too clever to be great. Some seats farther to the left side of the house was J. R. Van Rensselaer, their colleague from Columbia County; and on his right Judge Platt, of Oneida, then fifty-two years old, pious, honest and intensely serious in his efforts to check "the ravages of demagogues." The president might turn away from such a row where clustered his opponents, but looking toward the rear he could not fail to recognize the formidable Abraham Van Vechten, of Albany, "full of solid learning and solid sense," but with all the horror of a good Low Dutchman at any innovations whatsoever.

There remained two men of some importance in that little group, Ezekiel Bacon and Peter A. Jay, both born in Independence year. The former had served as an official under President Madison, but upon removing to the Mohawk Valley, being a man of enterprise, he had struck hands with Clinton, planned to build a packet to ply the Grand Canal, and stood out against all policies of its opponents. As to Peter A. Jay, he was an able father's able son, inheriting his political philosophy together with his personal integrity, and called his adversaries quite impartially "the Jacobins," though certain radicals were singled out for special scorn. Such a galaxy of talent might well cause the president to wonder if in numbers there was strength. As frequently in history, the conservatives had learning on their side.

### THE FATE OF THE COUNCILS

It was not surprising that the Council of Revision was marked as first to feel the power of the people. The judiciary, it was said, must be separated from the other branches, to supply the check demanded by the perfect scheme of Montesquieu; the old Council had acted *ultra vires* when they vetoed laws as inexpedient; they should have passed on constitutionality alone.

But the chief reproach was founded on their Federalism and their arrogant attempts "to stay the march of progress." Opposition to the will of the majority was hopeless, and the Council was abolished without a dissenting vote, though not without a protest. Some, like the president, would hide the wound by saying that it had been done in kindness to relieve the judges of these disagreeable distractions, but this was but a thin deception, for, as everybody knew, the judges were themselves to be cashiered.

The moderate committee, which had discussed this question, advised that the negative be given to the governor, whose veto could be overridden by two-thirds of the legislature. Peter R. Livingston was for a mere majority. "Keep the power with the people," he adjured his hearers, "they will not abuse it." It appeared to him, he said, agreeing here with Jeremy Bentham, "like a solecism to say that the people would assent to measures which would be injurious to their own good." In this he had the aid of General Root, who observed that

in all ages, where free governments have existed, those have been found who would transfer to the minister or executive more power than was expedient for the good of the people. This tends to perpetuate the aristocracy which exists in the constitution, and instead of being fostered, should receive the firm opposition of those who advocate the cause of the people.

Tompkins, the president, believed that no negative was necessary. "There can be no use for a veto on the passing of laws," said he, "but to prevent violations of the constitution; and for this purpose your judicial tribunals are sufficient." The conservatives, on the other hand, would use the power especially in questions of expediency, but admitted that the plan of the committee was adequate, if the governor were given a sufficient length of term to make him independent. Van Buren's "moderate men" were satisfied and the measure was adopted.



The "people's adversaries" thus shorn of power, the convention took notice of the Council of Appointment. No one could say a word in its behalf. The wanton partisanship of the Democratic Council which had sat throughout that very spring had disgusted friend and foe alike; it was abolished by unanimous vote. Following the spirit of the times, the committee on this subject recommended that militia officers, except the very highest, be elected by the men in arms. The Federalist press might argue that popular elections would destroy authority; but what authority, it was replied, should be obeyed that did not spring directly from the people? Many civil servants likewise were to be elected, and cities were to choose their own; certain officers of the state administration, like the treasurer, the comptroller and the secretary of state, were now to be selected by the legislature; while others, including all the judges, were to be appointed by the governor, subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

This last proposal introduced the question of the governor's term. Spencer, Kent, Jay, Platt, Williams, the Van Rensselaers, Van Vechten and Van Ness, together with obscure fellow partisans, voted for continuation of the three-year term. At the opposite extreme were Colonel Young, General Root, P. R. Livingston, and others who desired annual elections, following that "great principle of republicanism—rotation in office." Again Van Buren, always anxious that the party enterprise be not wrecked upon excess, came forward with a compromise calling for a two-year term, which was accepted by a scant majority. P. R. Livingston, however, was still determined that the executive be curbed wherever possible. Still following Jefferson, he had it laid down in the constitution that the governor should address the legislature only by a written message—"the speech," said he, was "a relic of monarchy, founded in the love of pomp and splendour and show."

## THE SUFFRAGE

But it was the question of the suffrage which elicited the great debates of the convention; it was held to be of more than local or temporary interest. The conservatives believed that those who held property were the able, and that government by the able was preferable to government by the mass. Elisha Williams argued that those in whose hands sovereignty was lodged were trustees for the rest. It was natural that such men should be satisfied with the old constitution, which limited the franchise to those who held the requisite amount of real estate or rented tenements of a considerable value. The old system had worked well, they said; the state had grown in business and in population. Was it, then, the "part of wisdom to substitute experiment for experience?" Gentlemen were warned of "doubtful and dangerous innovations." The delegates were there "convened to *amend* their constitution, not to *destroy* it." Talk of social evolution showed a shallow understanding; "man has been," said J. R. Van Rensselaer, "and probably always will be, subject to the same passions and feelings, and under like circumstances the future will strongly resemble the past." But the majority were not impressed with these sententious sayings.

The committee on the suffrage reported for a very liberal extension; every white male citizen twenty-one years old, who had resided for six months within his district and paid taxes, or on assessment had performed work on the public roads, or had been enrolled in the militia, might vote for any officer elected by the people. The chairman, Nathan Sanford, declared that this was what the electors had expected. The chancellor, however, voiced the protest of conservatives: "Such a proposition as that contained in the report, at the distance of ten years past, would have struck the public mind with astonishment and terror." Yet everyone was well aware that much had happened

in the last ten years. Chief Justice Spencer, hoping that a remnant might be saved, now offered an amendment providing that only those possessed "in law or equity" of a \$250 freehold could vote for senators. It was upon this proposition that the principal debate developed. Although the holding specified was left unchanged, there was one element of novelty, the introduction of an equity qualification for those who had not completed purchase and those who held large property on long leasehold.

To the defense of the amendment in general, there came an able champion. James Kent had fought throughout his whole career for the rights of the individual, as distinguished from those of the people. He could never forget that he was "Lord Chancellor," commissioned to uphold true legal principles however unpopular they might be. Yet in all that company, when he arose, there was not one to sneer. "When I recall the suspicions that then prevailed," wrote a delegate, John Duer, in later life, "and the censure in which others were then involved, I doubt whether a similar case is to be found in history." No abstract can do justice to the grave and solemn eloquence of the chancellor as, with an unmistakable accent of sincerity, he pleaded for the old order on that September afternoon in Albany. It demands quotation in long passages, for so complete was his defense that it touched on nearly every point that later was developed. "It was," as a member afterwards remarked, "an elegant epitaph of the old constitution."

Dare we flatter ourselves [he asked, when he had painted the calamities democracy had brought upon republics of the old world] that we are a peculiar people, who can run the career of history exempted from the passions which have disturbed and corrupted the rest of mankind? . . . The men of no property, together with crowds of dependents connected with the great manufacturing and commercial establishments, and the motley and indefinable population of the crowded ports, may, perhaps, at some future day, under skilful management,

predominate in the assembly, and yet we should be perfectly safe if no laws could pass without the free consent of the owners of the soil. That security we at present enjoy, and it is that security which I wish to retain. The apprehended danger from the experiment of universal suffrage applied to the whole legislative department, is no dream of the imagination. It is too mighty an excitement for the moral condition of men to endure. The tendency of universal suffrage is to jeopardize the rights of property and the principles of liberty. There is a constant tendency in human society—and the history of every age proves it—there is a constant tendency in the poor to covet and to share the plunder of the rich; in the debtor to relax or avoid the obligations of contract; in the majority to tyrannize over the minority, and trample down their rights; in the indolent and profligate to cast the whole burthen of society upon the industrious and virtuous; and there is a tendency in ambitious and wicked men to inflame those combustible materials. New York is destined to be the future London of America, and in less than a century that city, with the operation of universal suffrage, and under skilful management, will govern this state. . . .

Society is an institution for the protection of property as well as life, and the individual who contributes only one cent to the common stock ought not to have the same power and influence in directing the property concerns of the partnership as he who contributes his thousands. He will not have the same inducements to care and diligence and fidelity. His inducements and his temptation would be to divide the whole capital upon the principles of agrarian law. . . . We have to apprehend the oppression of minorities, and a disposition to encroach upon private right—to disturb chartered privilege—and to weaken, degrade and overawe the administration of justice [especially since the delegates are] already determined to withdraw the watchful eye of the judicial department from the passage of the laws. . . . We stand, therefore, on the brink of fate, on the very edge of a precipice. If we let go our present hold on the senate, we commit our proudest hopes and our most precious interests to the waves.

The sentiment that property rights must have particular protection was general among the Federalists.

Life and liberty are common to all [said Abraham Van Vechten], but the possession of property is not. Hence the owners of property have rights which, in relation to those who are destitute, are separate and exclusive.

Those should have a greater voice who have a greater stake in society, remarked Elisha Williams.

They are the patrons of your institutions, civil and religious [added Judge Van Ness]. They build your churches, and defend your altars and the country of which they are the protectors. They erect your school-houses, found and support your colleges and seminaries of learning, establish and maintain your charitable institutions, and construct your roads and canals.

The chancellor declared again that life and liberty were seldom jeopardized; it was property which must be walled against assault. Gen. J. R. Van Rensselaer conjured up the gloomy prospect of agrarian laws; the poor had always coveted the goods of the more prosperous, and, if they had the power, they would gratify their criminal desires by a general distribution.

When Democrats declared that the franchise was *demanded* by the poor, Federalists became impatient. If they demanded thus what was not theirs, how long, if it were granted, before they would demand the property itself? "Sir," said one, "if it be just and safe to confer this right, it should be bestowed gratuitously; nothing should be yielded to this menacing demand." "Are we jealous of property," inquired the chief justice, "that we should leave it unprotected?" He was assured by Radcliffe, of New York, that gentlemen need not despair about the helplessness of property; it would always carry with it an influence quite sufficient for its own protection; to give it artificial aid was to make it dangerous to other rights. If property must specially be represented, why should there not be two votes for the holder of five hundred dollars' worth, and twenty for a man who held five thousand? Society was not a money partnership, but an association of all men for the common good.

But it was freehold property for which the Federalists felt a singular concern. They assured their colleagues that here there was no danger of large accumulation. Few estates would grow in size; on the contrary, by the operation of the laws for regulating descents, the holdings would grow smaller. Landowners, representing the most stable and important interest, should have a distinct weight in one branch of the legislature. Personal property might elude the eye, but theirs was always there, imperishable and immovable and ready for the tax assessor. It was because of this that they were called upon to pay a disproportionate amount into the public treasury. When danger threatened, the landless man might swing his pack upon his shoulder and disappear from sight, but the yeoman and his son must stay, abide the draft and defend the state. They were the least dispensable of all society; prosperity was bottomed upon agriculture; its surplus products made possible the arts and the professions. Then, too, that ancient superstition that honesty is the peculiar quality of countrymen was exploited in well-rounded periods. To hear the Federalists, remarked a Democrat, one would conclude that all rights were safe if thirty-two men from the sacred turf sat gravely in the Senate.

In another argument of the conservatives can be seen a faint reflection of the rivalries in England; as in the Parliamentary contests of 1832 and 1867, so here was heard the warning that to qualify the landless would so increase the influence of selfish manufacturers as to create an aristocracy far more pernicious than that which it would supplant. Single men employed in factories, and boarding here and there, would have the ballot; but, observed the chief justice, "under the pretence of giving the right to them, we in fact give it to those who employ, clothe and feed them." It was the influence of this kind of property so concentrated, said J. R. Van Rensselaer, that he dreaded as a source of evil to the state.

Van Buren, on the other hand, declared the old arrangement most unjust; when three-eighths of all the property in the state was personal, why should real estate be so specially favored? In rejoinder, Judge Van Ness affected to regard with dread the battenning money interest. The lines were to be drawn as distinctly as between the sexes; witness how parties were aligning on the question of the tariff. Commerce and agriculture, he declared, must intrench themselves against the manufacturers. As for the holders of securities and money whom Van Buren had commiserated, let them invest \$250 in real estate, said Abraham Van Vechten; nineteen-twentieths of them had done so already, added Van Ness. But J. R. Van Rensselaer finally admitted that these interests in New York State were not so disparate, and proposed a new amendment in which personal estate of the required sum was mentioned as alternative to freeholds held "in law or equity."

The Federalists found in the property qualification a stimulus to thrift: "If you *bestow* on the idle and profligate [asked Elisha Williams] the privileges which should be purchased only by industry, frugality and character, will they ever be at the trouble and pains to *earn* those privileges?" It might be said, remarked Ezekiel Bacon, that property itself conferred upon its owner no talents and no virtue, but in this country, at least, "it was a safe and general rule that industry and good habits did, in almost every instance, conduct the man who practiced them to some moderate share of property." "As to those who failed," said Judge Van Ness, "by an irreversible decree of Providence, it was pronounced that the poor ye have always with you. . . . But what was the character of the poor? Generally speaking, vice and poverty go hand in hand."

Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, the patroon, would not insist upon \$250 as a minimum for qualification, but the payment of some money tax he thought quite indispensable; he opposed the

clauses which would qualify voters under road work and militia duty. Yet, responded Doctor Ross of Genesee, this proposition would leave unenfranchised many, if not most, of those the general had commanded in the War of 1812. In that trying day, who came forward into service? inquired ex-Governor Tompkins. "Not the priesthood—not the men of wealth—not the speculators: the former were preaching sedition, and the latter decrying the credit of the government to fatten on its spoil." Mr. Sharpe explained the importance of the militia clause to the constituencies in the city of New York, where there was no public work upon the highways. General Root, always disconcerting in his frankness, revealed a cogent reason for the Democrats' anxiety to qualify all militiamen:

They will not vote for peace-party men, but for men who are willing to bare their breasts to the arms of the enemy. . . . Not one in ten of these young militiamen would vote for a haughty, proud, domineering aristocrat; they will vote for *republicans*.

"The cry of aristocracy has been too frequently addressed to this convention," complained Abraham Van Vechten. "I trust the old names of Aristocrat and Republican will persist," was General Root's response, "till the former shall be bound to the footstool of the later."

Recurring in the Federalists' argument, like the motif in a fugue, came the fear of New York City. While among the citizens of that community, they said, there were some who had as much of virtue as any corresponding number elsewhere in the state, and more of wealth, talent, refinement and acquirements in literature, there were also those more ignorant, more wretched, more vicious and miserable, the instruments of any demagogue. And these by immigration would increase out of all proportion.

The chancellor and Judge Van Ness reviewed the city's



growth and contributed their dismal prophecies. Van Vechten said that the average of the senatorial votes under the old system in the wards of the metropolis was some 4,000; the proposed extension would increase this by more than threefold. The agricultural interest would be outweighed completely.

But the radicals were warmed by their own oratory and, impatient of obstruction by these voluble conservatives, soon advanced to more extreme positions. General Root brought in an amendment which would qualify the sons of those provided for by the committee, and Melancthon Wheeler, a member from Washington County, moved further to include all citizens who had been three years within the state, and one within the town in which they registered. In late September such confusion came to mark the voting that no man could prophesy what the next hour would bring forth. Certain Federalists like Williams, Bacon and Van Ness fanned the flame that had been kindled by the root-and-branch Republicans, and apparently were willing to participate in any movement that would run to such absurdity as to disgust the voters at the polls with the whole constitution.

One day the convention voted to withdraw the franchise from those who merely worked upon the highways, and the next day voted by about the same majority to make it universal, on the plan of Mr. Wheeler. The moderate Democrats expostulated at this "phrensy." Van Buren said this would increase the electorate of New York City to 25,000 men, enough to outweigh many counties in the west. Ogden Edwards thought the time would come when those who now opposed demands for universal suffrage would be remembered as the benefactors of the state. "High-minded" Federalists, like Duer, now counseled once again the exclusion of militiamen; their organ, the *New York American*, warned solemnly against excess. In a Sunday recess, Rufus King, weary of it all, wrote to his son Charles that "should the right of suffrage be made universal, the foun-

dation of the constitution will be such as to impair my safe reliance on the superstructure." Edwards finally was able to carry through a resolution to commit the whole question of the suffrage to a select committee, who might formulate an article more consonant with the deliberate judgment of the delegates.

The committee brought in a proposal very similar to that which had originally been offered. It was fought through, clause by clause, and finally carried by a vote of nearly two to one. When the Federalists, led by Peter A. Jay, sought to extend the same new privileges to Negroes as to whites, their opponents laid aside their democratic theory and voted no. The old property qualifications were retained for this small fraction of the voters until outlawed by the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution in 1870. It was hoped by the conservatives that some privilege might still be kept for property by a requirement, which was once accepted by the convention, that candidates for senator must have a thousand dollars' worth of real estate, but even this small relic of the old restrictions was denied them, for, by a resolution of Colonel Young, a simple freehold was at last declared sufficient. The conservatives had again been routed.

#### THE END OF ARISTOCRACY IN POLITICS

Any who had stood between the people and their will were to feel the heavy hand of the convention. The judges who had made up the old Council of Revision must know their masters' scorn. Appointments to the supreme bench had run until the judge was sixty years of age; under this arrangement the eldest, the chief justice, had four more years to serve, while the youngest, Judge Van Ness, would not be superseded until 1836. The chancellor would retire the following year, likewise at the age of sixty, unless considering his unique capacity the convention should extend the age of service in the equity court. But,

in spite of Federalist appeals, there was apparently but little disposition so to do. In judicial duties he was unassailable, admitted the "high-minded" Peter Jay Munro, but outside the court room, retaining the prestige of his high office, he was a menace to the liberty and safety of the masses. As to the other judges, a scheme was cunningly devised which provided for immediate retirement. The Federalist party left high office in the state forever.

That some leaders were quite willing to exclude the remnant of that party from any influence in the legislature is shown by a proposal of Van Buren. The Federalist majority in Columbia County would be sufficient to carry the third senatorial district, as planned by the committee. Van Buren moved to take Columbia away from Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, Schoharie and Schenectady, and attach it to the Democratic second district running down the Hudson River; and to take from this in compensation the safe and constant counties of Sullivan and Ulster, and transfer them to the third. A prompt and effectual remonstrance came from Elisha Williams, on whom Van Buren lavished no affection:

In the third district you have a Gerrymander. The monster will curl its tail on the mountains of Jersey—coil along the borders of Pennsylvania, wind its scaly and hideous carcass between the crooked lines of counties, and finally thrust his head into Bennington. Disguise it as you will, the object will be visible, and the people will understand it is to exclude federalism from every senatorial district.

Van Ness presented an amendment to the prejudice of New York City, but both were soon defeated in the vote and the committee's apportionment was allowed to stand.

Devices to humiliate the Federalists were scarcely needed; their favorite theories had been as thoroughly discredited as those of astral influence and the philosopher's stone. Although

there was some carping at the constitution as not giving quite enough scope to popular control, it was accepted at the polls by a majority of over 30,000. So certain was the victory that many did not take the trouble to vote.

The extension of the suffrage was not achieved by the eloquence of advocates; it came because it accorded with an American ideal. "From our cradles," wrote Judge Hammond, "we had been taught that a zealous support of equal rights and an extension of equal civil privileges to all was an evidence of our devotion to liberty and the true principles of a republican government." The impulse was not wholly spent in the convention. Five years later, what restrictions yet remained upon the franchise for white men were swept away, and the choice of the presidential electors was taken from the legislature and given to the voters. In the convention of 1821, no one had raised the question of electing judges; the old English precedent of appointed courts had not been challenged. But in 1826, so potent was the new philosophy, an amendment was ratified, by the enormous vote of 129,098 against 1663, specifying that justices of the peace should be elected, a development to be completed in the election of all judges, as provided by the Constitution of 1846. In 1821, after the Council of Appointment had been abolished, the choice of the mayors of all the cities in the state had been intrusted to their common councils; but an amendment of 1833 transferred to the voters of New York City the election of its chief executive and, six years afterward, in 1839, a like privilege was extended to the electorate in all other cities. The Constitution of 1821, revolutionary as it was in its theory of equal privilege, had clung to the freehold qualification for governor and senators. With the passing of a quarter century, however, even this seemed an anachronism and, by an amendment of 1845, it was declared that "no property qualification shall be required to render a person eligible to or capable

of holding any public office in public trust in this state." To none of these amendments did the opposition muster more than 4 per cent of the total vote.

No longer was there in New York a theory that any class of men was wiser, abler or better than another in the public business. A political democracy had been established, that "perversion" of which Aristotle warned, "in which the mechanics and the hired laborers must needs be citizens." The ballot, in the Jeffersonian opinion, was a weapon of defense to protect the individual's rights; a decade must elapse before it was considered as an instrument of social progress. Yet to recognize and to define his rights, the young citizen must be enlightened by a systematic course of training, for Jefferson's whole theory rested on a "strong faith in the teachableness of the great mass of the people." The framers of the constitution realized that democracy and education must make their progress hand in hand, and their generation in New York showed an unexampled interest in the common school.

The achievement of the workingmen's parties after 1828, by which free schools were introduced, as well as protection of debtors from imprisonment and of mechanics against loss of wages and other consequences of the democratic constitutional reforms, must await discussion in another chapter.

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# THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES, 1777-1828

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*The New York Herald Tribune*







## THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES, 1777-1828

### THE RÉGIME OF GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON

THE first election in New York State was held in June, 1777, in compliance with an order of the Committee of Safety. Of the four candidates for governor, put forward by friends, two were in military service. George Clinton was in command of the troops in the Hudson Valley, and Philip Schuyler was at the head of the northern army. The other candidates were John Jay, chief author of the recently adopted state constitution, and John Morin Scott, a brilliant lawyer and a founder of the Sons of Liberty, who were engaged, as members of the Committee of Safety, in directing the civil government of the state. Like Schuyler and Clinton, Scott had been in military service; he was a brigadier general and had fought in the battle of Long Island. Of the four outstanding men, Jay alone openly electioneered—but not for himself. He wrote a letter advocating Schuyler for governor, and Clinton for lieutenant governor. Clinton was elected not only governor, but lieutenant governor as well. Upon resigning the latter office, the state senators chose Pierre Van Cortlandt president of the Senate; and as such, he served as lieutenant governor.

Toward the end of his first term, in the legislative session of 1779, Clinton inspired the Confiscation Act, penalizing with the loss of their estates "persons who had adhered to the enemy." This represents the first important division in the legislature. Moderate men opposed this drastic law; but the majority held that self-preservation governed, and that only those of unquestioned loyalty were wanted in the new state.

In 1780, Clinton was unopposed for a second term of three years; and Van Cortlandt was elected lieutenant governor. In

1783, when Clinton won his third victory, he received more than three times the combined votes of his opponents, Philip Schuyler and Ephraim Paine. The vote stood Clinton, 3,584; Schuyler, 643; Paine, 520; this small vote being due partly to the restricted suffrage and partly to public preoccupation with the war.

In 1784, the legislators divided again, when the Clintonian majority took back from Congress the power to appoint the collectors of customs in the ports of the state. This right, together with the power to collect and retain the duties on imports, had been ceded in 1781. At the time of this division on state rights, the minority was called the Schuyler party, and there was talk of nominating Schuyler for governor in 1786. But Clinton was reëlected without opposition. The scission became pronounced over the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Only the eloquence of Alexander Hamilton, now the leader of the anti-Clintonians, kept New York from rejecting the Constitution at the Poughkeepsie Convention in the summer of 1788, for no less than fifty of the sixty-five delegates were originally opposed to ratification. Before leaving for Poughkeepsie, Hamilton referred to Clinton and his adherents, in a letter to Madison, as "the anti-federal party." But the Clintonians did not regard themselves as merely a party of opposition, as witness the *New York Journal and Weekly Register*, of March 12, 1789: "The federals are manoeuvring to displace the Governor . . . for no other reason but because he is still a whig, a republican."

Out of these maneuverings emerged Robert Yates, associate judge of the supreme court, as the Federal nominee for governor. Yates was a follower of Clinton, and had zealously opposed ratification of the Federal Constitution. But shortly after voting against ratification at the Poughkeepsie Convention, he urged all to support it. The Federals nominated Van Cortlandt,

also a Republican, as the old Antifederalist party now called itself, for lieutenant governor, the nominations being made in Bardin's tavern in New York City, on February 11, 1789. Our early campaigns were conducted by committees of correspondence. Alexander Hamilton was chairman of this committee, and had thirteen aides, one of whom was Aaron Burr.

This union of Burr and Hamilton astonished the friends of Clinton; and their sentiments were thus voiced by a Philadelphian in the *New York Journal and Patriotic Register* of March 26, 1789:

I observe by the papers that Alexander H—l—n and Co. are artfully endeavoring to divide the patriotic party by setting up Judge Y——s as a competitor to the worthy Clinton. . . . But I hope the whigs will not be so easily taken in. Here, I am sorry to say, the tories rule the roost.

The Hamilton-Burr union almost encompassed Clinton's defeat, for he was reëlected by a majority of only 429. An extraordinary vote was cast; 12,900 of the freeholders, estimated at nearly 20,000, went to the polls. Some of the ballots, totaling 547 votes, arrived too late to be counted. But these came from Clintonian territory, and had they reached the canvassers in time, Clinton's majority would not have been quite so slim. His vote was 6,391, and Yates polled 5,962.

The Federals elected a majority to the Assembly; but as only a fourth of the representation in the Senate was chosen annually, the Republicans still controlled there. Clinton was saved from defeat by his popularity and the fruits of that political anomaly, the Council of Appointment. This body consisted of the governor and a senator, chosen by the Assembly, from each of the four great districts, as the constitution had it. All officials in the state, civil and military, were appointed by the Council. So apprehensive of the abuse of the appointing power were the framers

of the constitution that no senator could sit in the Council two years in succession. Clinton had not abused this power, but it was only natural that officeholders would support him. The new Council of Appointment was chosen on January 15, 1790. But as the Federals elected senators in the southern and western districts only, and had none from the eastern and middle districts, the Republican senators and Clinton controlled the Council. When Chief Justice Richard Morris resigned, Clinton nominated Yates, his recent opponent, for the place; and made Burr attorney general. Seemingly, Clinton had both Burr and Yates back in the fold. But Hamilton, as the dispenser of Federal patronage in New York, was building up a strong organization. In the following January, the legislature elected Burr to the United States Senate to succeed Schuyler, whose term would expire on March 4, 1791. Schuyler's defeat for reelection was due chiefly to the Livingston family, a political party in themselves. They had been Federals, but joined the Republican party in 1790, because Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, head of the clan, differed with Hamilton's financial policy. The Federals said Livingston was disappointed because he had not been named Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court; but it is hard to reconcile this partisan explanation with the career of the chancellor, who, next to his brother Edward, was the most brilliant of the Livingstons. In addition to being a preëminent jurist, he was one of the foremost financial authorities in the nation, and his report to Congress on December 14, 1779, on the country's finance problems would have received high praise if it had come from the pen of Hamilton. As Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs created by Congress on January 10, 1781, he gave shape to our diplomatic relations; and in 1789, as chancellor, administered the oath of office to President Washington. In political importance in the state, he ranked with Clinton, Schuyler and Hamilton; and none of his political con-

temporaries surpassed him in breadth of learning. He was a founder and first president of the Academy of Fine Arts, and a patron of the sciences. His enemies mistook his scholarly retirement for arrogance. Either is fatal in the maelstrom of politics.

#### THE FEDERALISTS ELECT JAY GOVERNOR

In the early part of 1792, when Clinton was serving his fifteenth year as governor, the Federals cast about for a candidate to run against him. After considering Yates and Burr, they nominated Jay who, as has been seen, had effaced himself from the state's first election by advocating the election of Schuyler and Clinton. Stephen Van Rensselaer, the patroon, was named for lieutenant governor. The Federals were confident of success. The patroon would cut into the Dutch vote, the backbone of Clinton's upstate following. Jay relied on some support from the Livingston family, because he had married a Livingston. The Federals planned wisely, for they elected their ticket. Then the board of canvassers, controlled by Clintonians, stole the election from Jay, who had won by a majority of nearly 400 votes. The board rejected the ballots of the counties of Clinton, Tioga and Otsego, where Jay had decisive majorities, and tabulated the rest of the state, where Clinton had a majority of 108, the bobtailed vote being Clinton, 8,440; Jay, 8,332.

The election was stolen under color of law. In Otsego the term of the sheriff had expired. Earlier in the year, when Clinton had been urged to name a successor, he replied that the old one could hold over. The sheriff *de facto* of Otsego deputized a messenger to take the ballots to the secretary of state. The deputy sheriff of Tioga fell ill while en route with the ballots, and turned them over to a clerk. In Clinton County, the sheriff neglected to deputize the messenger. The board of canvassers consisted of four Federals and seven Republicans. Unable to

agree, they submitted the question to the two United States senators. Burr and his Federal colleague, Rufus King, agreed on the law, but differed on its interpretation. King construed the law in furtherance of the privilege of suffrage; Burr interpreted the law literally. By a party vote of seven to four, the board gave the election to Clinton. To prevent a recount, the election thieves burned the disputed ballots.

Jay was holding a circuit in Vermont when robbed of the governorship. On Saturday morning, July 1, returning home by way of the Hudson Valley, he was received at Lansingburg by the citizenry, who entertained him at Platt's inn. Later, as the *Daily Advertiser* tells us, the reception committee escorted him to Troy, "where he crossed the river and was saluted on his landing with 15 discharges of a field piece, by a detachment of the Albany Independent Artillery Company, and a volley by the troop of horse." The return to his home was a triumphal procession; and only his sober counsels restrained the rage of the people; some were talking of armed revolt.

As Clinton's stolen term was ending, he announced his retirement; and his followers nominated Yates. Jay was renominated, and defeated Yates by a vote of 13,481 to 11,892.

Six weeks after his election, upon publication of the treaty he had negotiated with England, marching mobs denounced Jay as a traitor who had sold his country for gold, and he was burned in effigy, here and there, throughout the Union. His defenders were attacked—Hamilton was stoned in New York. To Jay's loss of popular esteem may be attributed the gains made by the Republicans in the legislative election of 1796. Burr, no longer a member of the Senate, was elected to the Assembly. Another Republican chosen was De Witt Clinton, nephew of the governor. But the unjust suspicions were forgotten by 1798, when Jay was reelected over Chancellor Livingston. The vote was Jay, 16,012; Livingston, 13,632.

In 1800, knowing that New York City's thirteen assemblymen would determine control of the legislature, and consequently the state's twelve votes in the electoral college, Burr persuaded a number of exceptional men to make up his Assembly ticket, among them, George Clinton, Brockholst Livingston, Horatio Gates and Samuel Osgood. While Hamilton could not offer such outstanding candidates, he followed Burr's example in making a house-to-house canvass, and the two leaders spoke nightly at ward meetings. The work of Burr and public resentment at President Adams' Alien and Sedition Laws resulted in a Republican triumph.

Hamilton, Schuyler, and other Federalist leaders—for in this campaign the press had grown partial to the extra syllable—set out to rob Jefferson of the presidency. They importuned Governor Jay to call a special session of the old legislature to change the method of selecting presidential electors. Under date of May 7, Hamilton besought Jay to recommend a law to choose electors by districts by popular vote. This, he wrote, "will insure a majority of votes in the United States for a federal candidate." He tried to conceal his political depravity with this Machiavelian mask: "In times like these in which we live it will not do to be overscrupulous." And then this argument: "It is easy to sacrifice the substantial interests of society by a strict adherence to ordinary rules." But the high-minded governor spurned the proposal, for he respected the will of the majority.

The presidential intrigues and counterintrigues of Burr, now vice president, and Hamilton, were temporarily forgotten in the state election of 1801. Jay having earned the right to retire to the quiet of his Westchester farm, the minority named Stephen Van Rensselaer for governor. The Republicans turned to George Clinton, who received 24,808 votes to the 20,843 cast for the patroon. The Republicans also gained control of the legislature, and thus of the Council of Appointment.

## A DECADE OF PARTY FACTIONS

Immediately after Clinton's inauguration, while Jeffersonians watched approvingly, the Livingstons and the Clintons began their campaign to eliminate Burr from the party in the state. Burr's scheming for the presidency was their excuse. Through the Council of Appointment, they apportioned all important offices among themselves. Edward Livingston, whose Louisiana Code was later to astonish an applauding world, was appointed mayor of New York City. Other appointments were Brockholst Livingston, judge of the supreme court; Morgan Lewis, a brother-in-law of Edward Livingston, chief judge of the supreme court; Thomas Tillotson, another brother-in-law of Edward, secretary of state; William Stewart, a brother-in-law of Governor Clinton, district attorney of Tioga and other counties in the southern tier; Sylvanus Miller, a Clinton lieutenant in Kingston, surrogate of New York County; and so on. John Armstrong, a brother-in-law of Chancellor Livingston, resigned from the United States Senate so that De Witt Clinton could succeed him. Then when Edward Livingston went to Louisiana, De Witt Clinton resigned as United States senator to be mayor of New York, and John Armstrong was returned to his seat in the Senate. But Burr was not without a following, especially in New York City. John Swartwout, an ardent Burrite, accused De Witt Clinton of planning the war on Burr for selfish and unworthy reasons. A duel ensued, and Swartwout was shot twice in the leg. There were other political duels, like that which cost the life of Philip Hamilton, in 1801; and that which grew out of it two years later, when William Coleman, editor of the *New York Evening Post*, killed Captain Thompson, the harbor master. Vehement journalistic controversy culminated in a famous war of pamphlets shot back and forth by John Wood, James Cheetham, William P. Van Ness ("Aristides"), and other scurrilous writers who remain anonymous.



The state was on edge as the presidential election of 1804 approached. Burr was fighting back. Barred from the national ticket, he decided to run for governor. He had promises of aid from Federalist leaders the country over, but Hamilton stood against him. The Clinton-Livingston faction of the Republicans nominated Chancellor Lansing for governor and John Broome for lieutenant governor.

On the night of February 16, Hamilton and a number of Federalist members of the legislature met behind closed doors in Lewis' tavern in Albany to consider the situation. Their small vote in 1803 made a Federal ticket impracticable; a majority preferred Burr, but Hamilton wanted Lansing. Two Burr-ites, concealed in an adjoining room, published a report of the secret meeting. Lansing then withdrew, and Morgan Lewis was named in his stead. The day following Lansing's withdrawal, the Burr-ites in the legislature nominated their chief for governor. A week after Burr's nomination for governor, the Republican congressional caucus renominated Jefferson and named George Clinton for vice president. This formal repudiation of Burr, and Hamilton's relentless campaign against him, made Burr's defeat certain. Lewis received 30,829 votes in the election and Burr, 22,139.

It was a contest of unbridled bitterness. Burr was the target of the press supporting Lewis. Pamphlets and broadsides helped to spread the calumnies. A few short weeks after his defeat, Burr put an end to his political career on the Weehawken dueling ground. The death of Hamilton, whom he killed there, left the Federalist party in the state more sadly shattered than ever; and, with Burr a fugitive and an outcast, it was in order to expect a struggle between the Clintons and the Livingstons, for De Witt Clinton was highly talented and equally ambitious.

In the spring of 1805, De Witt Clinton, still mayor of New York, was elected to the old seat in the state Senate. Shortly after, the war between the Clintonians and the Livingston fam-

ily emerged into the open. Before the autumn waned, the Clintonians had quietly arranged to unite with the Burrrites, the union being consummated in New York City with a supper at Dyde's hotel, on February 20, 1806. Many influential Burrrites were embittered against the Livingstons because Lewis removed Peter B. Porter, clerk of Ontario County, solely because he supported Burr for governor. The day after the supper at Dyde's, several disgruntled Burrrites and followers of the Livingston family called a protest meeting, for February 24, in the Long Room of the tavern of Abraham Martling, a Tammany sachem, and there the Clintonian-Burrite union and its authors were denounced. Until his death, Clinton was to remain the chief object of the hatred of the Martling Men, as those who foregathered in this first Wigwam of Tammany were originally called.

Clinton was in Albany, attending the session of the legislature, when these meetings were being held. When Governor Lewis presided at the first meeting of the new Council of Appointment, Clinton, and three other senators who acknowledged Clinton's leadership, were there to oppose him. On March 26, the Council removed Maturin Livingston from the office of recorder, replacing him by Pierre C. Van Wyck, a lieutenant of Clinton. Dr. Thomas Tillotson, who had married a sister of Chancellor Livingston, was deposed as secretary of state, to make way for Elisha Jenkins, a Clintonian. Other outstanding Quids, as the adherents of Governor Lewis were called, met the same fate. At the annual election in the ensuing month, the Federalists ceased being passive spectators. In districts formerly strongly Federal, they put up their own legislative candidates; elsewhere, they supported Quids. This coalition was successful; and only Quids were put on the 1807 Council of Appointment, which undid the work of its predecessor. Maturin Livingston was restored to the recordership; Dr. Tillotson went back as secretary

of state; Clinton was removed as mayor, and Marinus Willett appointed in his stead.

But while the Quids and Federalists in the Assembly gave Lewis a majority, the Clintonian Republican strength in the Senate was such that its factional rivals were outnumbered in a caucus; and on the evening of Clinton's removal, he and his legislative followers nominated Daniel D. Tompkins for governor. Tavern nominations had gone out of fashion. Tompkins, a former Burrite, was then on the supreme court bench. Lewis lost, polling but 30,989 to the 35,074 for Tompkins. The Clintonians elected a majority to the Assembly, and six days after the 1808 legislature convened on January 26, their Council of Appointment began removing all Livingstons and their supporters. Even officers of the militia, hitherto untouched by the spoils machine, were deprived of their commissions on the merest suspicion of loyalty to the Livingstons. Clinton, of course, was restored to the mayor's chair. One of the Clintonians appointed was Martin Van Buren, who was made surrogate of Columbia County for his zeal in behalf of Tompkins, who had been held up to the voters as "the farmer's son."

Tompkins was the state's first governor who did not owe his advancement to either wealth or family ties. When of voting age, he and thirty other propertyless youths qualified by purchasing a house in New York City; this device, known in England as "fagot voting," was suggested by Burr, or his friend and biographer, Matthew L. Davis, grand sachem of Tammany. The Federalists required no such dodge. They were mostly men of fair means.

As Jefferson's second term neared its end, the Republican Congressmen nominated James Madison for first place and re-nominated Vice President Clinton. In not promoting the vice president, precedent was shattered. The Clintonian press accused the Virginia dynasty of holding that only a Virginian

was fit to be president, a charge not peculiar to the Clintonians, for John Adams and others voiced this view. The Clintonians showed their resentment against Madison's nomination by casting six of New York's nineteen electoral votes for George Clinton for president. The continued dissension among the Republicans, and the prostration of commerce because of the Embargo Act, resulted in a Federalist majority to the Assembly in the election of 1809. There being no Federalist senators in two of the districts, the Republicans controlled the Council of Appointment. But the Federalists obtained control of the Council by bribing Robert Williams, one of its number. His price was the appointment of his son-in-law, Thomas J. Oakley, as surrogate of Dutchess County.

#### TAMMANIES AND COODIES

In the state election of 1810, the clouds of the Napoleonic wars cast their shadows here. The Federalists accused the Republicans of being partial to France, saying we had more cause to go to war with France than with Great Britain. The Republicans answered with recollections of the awesome massacres by the Indian allies of the British in the Revolution, and defended the Berlin and Milan decrees as necessary war measures taken by Napoleon against Great Britain. The Republicans had the popular side, and Tompkins was reelected. He polled 43,094 votes to the 36,484 cast for Jonas Platt of Oneida, the Federalist candidate. The Republicans regained control of the Assembly, and one of the first acts of the Council of Appointment of 1811 was to return De Witt Clinton to the New York City Hall from which he had been removed the previous year.

Because of the death on August 8, 1810, of Lieutenant Governor John Broome, the legislature passed an act for the election of his successor in the spring polls. The Republican legislators

nominated De Witt Clinton, who sought this new honor as a stepping-stone to the presidency. The Tammany men rebelled and nominated Marinus Willett at a meeting in Martling's Long Room, soon to be supplanted as a meeting place by Tammany Hall. The hand of the ambitious Tompkins was evident in this, for Mangle Minthorne, his father-in-law, presided at the Tammany convention, which accused Clinton of trying to establish a pernicious family aristocracy. Clinton's friends called a countermeeting; but when they met in the Union Hotel, the Tammany men drove them into the street. The Federalists nominated Nicholas Fish, who, as it turned out, received the votes of a majority of the Tammany men, thus giving him the lead in New York City where Clinton ran a poor third; but Clinton's popularity upstate saved him.

In December, De Witt Clinton, as a member of the recently created Canal Commission, went to Washington and vainly tried to obtain a Federal land grant to promote the project. The Martling Men denounced the canal as impracticable and as a scheme to advance Clinton's presidential aspirations.

During the legislative session of 1812, Albany was besieged by agents seeking a state charter for the Bank of America. Like most Republicans, Clinton was opposed to banks; but several of his legislative colleagues, on whom he was relying to launch his presidential boom, had forsworn their faith and accepted bribes contingent upon the granting of the charter. The venal members declined to caucus and nominate Clinton as the state's choice for the presidency until the charter was granted. While Clinton's friends pleaded with them to caucus, Tompkins prorogued the legislature, on March 27, until May 21. The reason he offered was the activities of the bank lobbyists. His real purpose was to delay Clinton's nomination until after the congressional caucus had acted. While the legislature was in forced recess, Vice President George Clinton died in Washington, on

April 20. After the legislature reconvened, the Republican caucus nominated De Witt Clinton, although Madison had been renominated by a congressional caucus.

On June 18, the day before the legislature adjourned, war was declared against Great Britain. All the Clintonians in Congress voted, with many other Republicans, against this declaration. Clinton began intriguing with the Federalists who, with rare exceptions, opposed the war. At a large conference of Federalists from several states, held in New York City in September, Clinton was nominated as the party's choice for president, and Jared Ingersoll, of Pennsylvania, for vice president. Although Clinton was supporting the war, he was preferred to Madison.

When the legislature convened to choose presidential electors, Martin Van Buren managed the caucus. Van Buren, new in the Senate, offered to divide the electors on the basis of the respective legislative strength of the Madisonians and Clintonians. When the offer was spurned, Clinton was given the state's entire vote. But for Pennsylvania's twenty-five votes, Clinton would have been president. Clinton's bid for the presidency lost him a re-nomination for lieutenant governor, John Tayler being named in his stead. Tompkins was renominated by acclamation, defeating Stephen Van Rensselaer by a vote of 43,324 to 39,718. The Federalists, however, carried the Assembly by a majority of ten.

After the April election of 1815, when the Federalists again elected a majority to the Assembly, the Tammanies—such was their plural designation then—and the Coodies forced Clinton's removal as mayor. When Gulian C. Verplanck satirized Clinton under the nom de plume of Abimalech Coody, he replied that Verplanck was "the head of a political sect called the Coodies, of hybrid nature, composed of the combined spawn of federalism and Jacobinism." And, for more than a decade, the term Coodies was part of our political nomenclature.

In February, 1816, the Republican legislative caucus instructed the New York delegation in Congress to support Tompkins for president. A week later, they renominated him for governor. Then the congressional caucus nominated him as Monroe's running mate. Tompkins was elected to both offices, defeating Rufus King by 45,412 votes to 38,647. To avoid an immediate contest with Clinton, who sought to succeed Tompkins as governor, the Coodies first proposed that Tompkins serve out his term while acting as vice president. Then they suggested that Tayler fill out the unexpired term. But the state constitution provided that the lieutenant governor could perform the duties of the chief executive only until the next succeeding annual election, which in this case meant April, 1817; and so a bill for a special election was passed.

Clinton immediately called a state nominating convention, the first held in New York. Counties controlled by Federalists sent delegates, Republican counties being represented by their legislators, and the convention met in Albany on March 25. The Coodies entered Peter B. Porter, but he received only 41 votes to the 85 for Clinton. The Tammanies bolted, and nominated Porter. Clinton was elected almost unanimously, for Porter polled but 1,479 of the 44,789 votes cast. The Federalists did not nominate a ticket, for their opposition to the war, their misunderstood Hartford Convention, and their espousal of Old World doctrines, had reduced them to a selected few.

#### DE WITT CLINTON AND THE BUCKTAILS

In De Witt Clinton's first year as governor, the Republicans opposed to him were called the Bucktail party. The name was rooted in the nucleus of the opposition, for the Tammanies were summoned to patriotic gatherings in newspaper advertisements always ending thus: "Each member will wear a Buck's tail in

his hat, the distinguishing badge of Tammany, in honor of the day." Attorney General Van Buren, having now broken with Clinton, was the Bucktail leader. Clinton wanted party peace. Van Buren agreed to give it, if Clinton resigned the governorship to accept a foreign post from Monroe. Clinton retorted by removing Van Buren as state attorney general. The war went on. With the aid of a few Federalist votes, the Bucktails obtained control of the Canal Commission, with its desirable contracts and countless jobs.

In December, 1819, Republican legislators arriving in Albany for the 1820 session received copies of an anonymous pamphlet asking them to reelect King to the United States Senate. Van Buren was the author; and William Learned Marcy, who was to amaze the Republic with his "to the victors belong the spoils" speech, and whose career is sketched in more detail below, polished the phrases. Shortly after King's return to the Senate, the Bucktails nominated Vice President Tompkins for governor. He was tired of Washington. In response to Van Buren's appeal to King for Federalist support, forty-eight Federalists, including the sons of King and Alexander Hamilton, urged the election of Tompkins. The signers said their party had been annihilated, and that Clinton surrounded himself with sycophants "disgusting to the feelings of all truly high minded . . . men." Clinton characterized the appeal as the product of "High Minded" Federalists. By this name, shortened to the High Minded, this division of his opponents was thereafter known.

The letter of the High Minded was but part of the many-sided attack on Clinton. Personally, he was above reproach. He was popular, given to plain dress, and had the esteem of the scholars of the state. He fraternized with the faculty of Columbia College, from which he was graduated at the head of his



class of 1786. He had succeeded to the presidency of the Academy of Fine Arts which Chancellor Livingston founded, and was also president of the Literary and Philosophical Society and the New York Historical Society. Unable to deny his talents, his enemies made light of them. This was the amusing side of the attack on Clinton, and was given direction by two of the High Minded, John Duer and Gulian Crommelin Verplanck, whose *Opera Minora of the Poeta Bucktailici*, the *Bucktail Bards* of beloved memory, was published shortly before the appeal of the High Minded. Even Clinton must have chuckled as he read:

'Tis Dr. Clinton, our State's chief reliance,  
A paragon of learning, wit and science,  
Skilled in all arts, the Crichton of our day.

Clinton, himself gifted in pasquinade, described his lettered critics as "the witlings, the poetasters, and the sciolists of the country, who unite to run down merit which they cannot imitate . . . literary punchinellos and shallow-pated coxcombs . . . the fag ends of the learned professions, and the outcasts of reputable associations."

But Clinton barely succeeded against the combination of the High Minded, the Bucktails, and the Monroe administration. The vote was Clinton, 47,447; Tompkins, 45,990. The anti-Clintonians elected a majority to the Assembly, and so controlled the Council of Appointment. Roger Skinner, later a circuit judge, was Van Buren's faithful spokesman in the Council.

Four appointments of the Council are important. Benjamin F. Butler, Van Buren's law partner, was made district attorney of Albany County; Samuel A. Talcott, state attorney general; Benjamin Knowler, father-in-law of Marcy, state treasurer; Marcy, adjutant general.

## THE ALBANY REGENCY

These four, Marcy, Knower, Talcott and Butler, with Van Buren and Skinner, constituted the first governing group of the Bucktail party. Van Buren was its directing genius, but never its dictator; and when he took his seat in the United States Senate in the following year, his lieutenants governed in his absence. Because most of them lived in or near Albany, this circle of exceptional men was called the Albany Regency. Closest to Van Buren was Butler, who was of New England stock, a lineal descendant of Oliver Cromwell and, like Van Buren, the son of a tavern keeper. He was born in Kinderhook Landing, and knew Van Buren from childhood. After a course at the Hudson Academy, he studied law under Van Buren. After the revision of New York statutes, Chancellor Kent gave the chief credit for the splendid achievement to Butler; and it is not strange that when Van Buren's star rose, Butler served in the cabinets of Jackson and Van Buren. Then there was Edwin Croswell, whose father was the prosperous editor of the *Catskill Recorder*. In 1823, he became editor of the Regency's organ, the *Albany Argus*, and toward the end of the legislative session of that year was made state printer. A brilliant journalist, he was soon shaping the editorial opinions of party journals everywhere. The background of his childhood and youth was more cultured than that of any of his associates; and his profits as state printer made him rich. But he was avaricious, and became head of the cabal excoriated in 1836 by William Leggett as "creeping, dissembling creatures, who have grown fat on the drippings of unclean bank legislation." Croswell was the only venal member of the Regency and, when it was to his profit, he betrayed Van Buren and the rest. Azariah Cutting Flagg affiliated with the Regency soon after his election to the Assembly in 1822. He was born in Clinton County in 1790, and at the age of eleven was appren-

ticed to a printer. He enlisted when the second war with England was declared, participating in several engagements. He established the *Plattsburg Republican*, and edited it for several years. He was secretary of state from 1826 to 1833, and state comptroller from 1834 to 1839; and when, years later, he moved to New York City, he was elected comptroller of the metropolis. When darkness fell upon him, he received a letter from Van Buren saying that he never knew a man "more exclusively devoted to the public interest or who labored with a purer or more disinterested zeal for their advancement." There is a bronze tablet on the home of the American Antiquarian Society recording a side of Flagg known only to historians. To this noblest of his co-workers, Van Buren paid this tribute in his memoirs: "the financial and economical systems [of New York], devised and matured by those unpretending, but able public servants and benefactors, Wright, Hoffman, Flagg and their associates." Hoffman was born in Clifton Springs, Saratoga County, in 1788, and was christened Michael. He was, in turn, doctor, lawyer and politician. He was county judge of Herkimer County from 1830 to 1833, and was district attorney there from 1823 to 1825; he served in the House of Representatives from 1825 to 1833; he was canal commissioner from 1833 to 1835; in 1836 he was appointed register of the land office at Saginaw, Illinois; he was a member of the Assembly in 1841, 1842 and 1844, and was chairman of its ways and means committee; and was naval officer of the port of New York from 1845 to the time of his death in 1848. William Learned Marcy, who had the most distinguished public career of any of the Regency, was born in Southbridge, Massachusetts, in 1786. After he was graduated at Brown, he studied law and practiced in Troy. Like Flagg, he also volunteered in the War of 1812. While commanding a company of light infantry, he captured the first prisoners taken on land by the Americans when he

overcame the Canadian forces at Saint Regis. In 1816 he was appointed recorder of Troy, and after his removal by De Witt Clinton, edited the *Troy Budget*. He served with distinction in the state supreme court, and was thrice elected governor of the state. He was Secretary of War under Polk, and Secretary of State under Pierce. He sat in the United States Senate from 1831 until he resigned two years later, to run for governor. His diplomatic achievements are unknown to many, but one phrase from his maiden speech in the Senate is remembered by all; in defending the spoils system of the Regency, he said he saw nothing wrong "in the rule that to the victor belongs the spoils of the enemy."

This spoils doctrine was the core of the philosophy of the Albany Regency. Save on rare occasions, the "regents" demanded merit of a high order in the men they appointed to office in reward for party service. When the caucus method of nominating candidates for state office gave way to the convention, they made their convention proof against stampede by sending delegates subservient to them, chiefly officeholders. And when the Regency passed away, it left to its successors, in New York and elsewhere, a system of party discipline that its members had reduced to a science.

Clinton saw the Regency taking shape, and played into its hands by his inborn contempt for consequences. In October, 1820, at a convention in Tammany Hall, the Bucktails unanimously voted for a state constitutional convention, the delegates to have unlimited scope in proposing amendments. Back of this was the growing demand for several reforms, especially universal suffrage. The manorial interests, together with many of the foremost men, including Van Buren, were against "cheapening this invaluable right"—to quote Van Buren. And when the legislature met the next month to choose presidential electors, a bill was passed authorizing a convention. But it was rejected by the

Council of Revision consisting of the chancellor, judges of the supreme court, and the governor. Clinton cast the deciding vote. Such was the protest against this veto that the Council of Revision dared not repeat itself when the bill was passed in the 1821 session. The work of the convention was ratified by a vote of 74,732 to 41,402. Save for a property qualification for Negroes, virtually universal male suffrage was established, the Councils of Appointment and Revision were abolished, and other progressive reforms became the basic law. The terms of governor and lieutenant governor were shortened to two years.

Having almost complete control of the legislature in 1822, the Regency revived the caucus method of nominating. Joseph C. Yates, judge of the supreme court, was named for governor. Knowing that he had no chance, Clinton withdrew gracefully. The Republicans elected all their candidates to the Senate—the entire body as, under the new constitution, the Senate changed biennially. The Assembly was also almost wholly Bucktail. Few partisans of Clinton were left in the legislature. So complete was the Bucktail victory that Solomon Southwick, a self-starter against Yates, received only 2,910 votes out of an aggregate of 131,403. But, within a year, trouble began brewing for the Regency. Early in 1823, it was for Crawford for president; but many influential Bucktails were for John Quincy Adams or Henry Clay, while a few favored Calhoun. The Clintonians supported Jackson. The opponents of Crawford raised the cry, voiced by anti-Crawford men the country over, of “Down with King Caucus,” and demanded a law empowering the people to choose presidential electors.

The refusal of the Regency to heed this demand led to the formation of the People’s party, which nominated candidates for Senate and Assembly. The organizers of the new party were mainly High Minded Federalists. Such was the clamor against the Regency that the Assembly of 1824 was organized by the

People's party men. The Assembly passed the electors bill, but the Senate, controlled by the Regency, deferred action until the legislature should reconvene in November to choose presidential electors. This was adding fuel to the flames. Seeking to make Yates its scapegoat, the Regency denied him renomination, and named Samuel Young for governor at a legislative caucus. Denouncing caucus nominations, the People's party members issued a call for a state convention in Utica. Five days later, on April 12, on the closing day of the session, the Regency sprang a surprise. A resolution was introduced in the Senate removing Clinton from the canal board. It was his only public office, and from it he drew no salary. The resolution was adopted with but three dissenting votes, and with a handful of nays, the Assembly concurred. Speaking of this shameful act, the *Evening Post* said: "The envenomed malignity . . . must cause the cheek of every honorable man who calls himself a New Yorker to blush with shame." Protest meetings were held everywhere. In New York City, ten thousand men met and groaned, "Regency! Regency! Regency!"

Hoping to be the choice of the People's party convention, Governor Yates convoked the legislature in extraordinary session on August 2, to consider the bill to change the mode of choosing presidential electors. The legislature censured the governor for calling the session, made speeches, and then adjourned. The Utica Convention met on September 21. The People's party delegates wanted for governor James Tallmadge, one of their representatives in the Assembly. But Tallmadge's vote for Clinton's removal was against him; and on the second day, Clinton himself was nominated, and Tallmadge was named for lieutenant governor. But this did not placate the minority, who bolted and at their own convention indorsed Tallmadge's nomination and assailed Clinton's. Yet they did not dare nominate a candidate to oppose Clinton. An angry electorate swept Clinton into

office with 103,452 votes, Young polling but 87,093. As the returns showed the defeat of the Regency, Van Buren said to Skinner: "I hope, Judge, you are now satisfied that there is in politics such a thing as killing a man too dead." Van Buren was in Washington in his seat in the Senate when Skinner, unknown to him, decided on Clinton's removal.

Shortly after Adams was inaugurated, Van Buren became the chief critic of the administration. His advocacy of Jackson's candidacy again placed him on common ground with Clinton; and the Regency supported the governor on occasions. When the Clintonian state convention met in Utica on September 1, 1826, the delegates were confident that the Regency would name a weak candidate to oppose their choice. Henry Huntington was named to run with Clinton. But Van Buren plotted otherwise; and at the Regency party convention in Herkimer on October 3, William B. Rochester, secretary to the Panama Commission, and son of a business partner of Clay's father-in-law, was nominated to oppose Clinton. The Regency circulated the false report that Washington had dictated the naming of Rochester, and no one in the Adams administration denied the untruth. The canard almost defeated Clinton, who won by only 3,650 plurality. His vote was 99,785. Nathaniel Pitcher, the Regency nominee for lieutenant governor, defeated Clinton's running mate.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE ANTIMASONIC PARTY

Clinton lost many votes in the counties of Genesee and Monroe; it was whispered there that he had ordered the mysterious execution of William Morgan. From the dark recesses of the hidden drama involved in Morgan's slaying, emerged a political party which became national in scope—the Antimasonic Party. Morgan, although a Mason, was preparing for publication parts

of the Masonic ritual when he was seized at his home in Batavia, Genesee County, on September 11, 1826, on a charge of petit larceny. His accuser was Nicholas G. Chesebro, master of a Masonic Lodge at Canandaigua. After his discharge on this complaint, Morgan was rearrested on a civil process. The following night, he was taken from the jail in Canandaigua to Fort Niagara where he remained imprisoned until his disappearance. Clinton was the grand high priest of the Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons; this circumstance was the sole basis of the foul charge against him.

In the spring of 1827, Masons were denied nomination by various town conventions in Monroe and Genesee counties. Before this action was taken, the question of making Morgan's death a political issue was considered by Thurlow Weed, James S. Wadsworth, Assemblyman Francis Granger, and others from the infected district, as the cradle of Antimasonry became known. Sentiment was divided. Although Clinton offered a reward of \$2,000—then a princely sum—to aid in solving the mystery, and instituted a prosecution which led to indictments and convictions for abduction, the movement spread. The Masons were pictured as a murderous brotherhood; and Weed and other opportunists capitalized the excitement and nominated and elected Antimasonic candidates for the legislature in the fall of 1827. As the movement was nearing its height, De Witt Clinton died, while conversing with his two sons in his library, on the evening of February 11, 1828. Antimasons attributed his death to "the goading of a guilty conscience."

#### SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliographies of Chapters II and III have been combined and follow Chapter III.

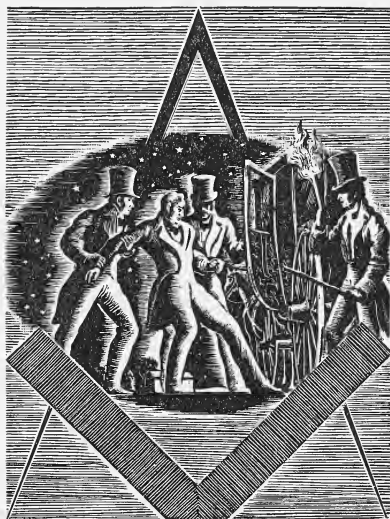


— III —

## PARTY STRUGGLES, 1828-1850

DENIS TILDEN LYNCH

*The New York Herald Tribune*





## PARTY STRUGGLES, 1828-1850

### VAN BUREN CREATES THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

VAN BUREN now became the manager of Jackson's presidential campaign in the state. Jackson was a Mason; on this was built the least of the slanders of 1828. The state canvass began on July 22, when the Adams men convened in Utica. Delegates from the infected district wanted Granger, spokesman for the Antimasons in the Assembly. The majority argued that Granger at the head of the ticket would drive those who frowned on Antimasonry into the Republican party; yet they were aware that without the Antimasons they would lose the state. A close vote resulted in the selection of Smith Thompson, an associate judge of the United States Supreme Court. Granger was named lieutenant governor by acclamation. The Antimasonic party, after organizing in Utica on August 6, named Granger for governor, although he had informed his friends that he did not desire this nomination. John Crary was given second place.

Before these conventions were held, it was known that Van Buren would run for governor, and that if elected he would serve but a few weeks, as Jackson intended him for the cabinet. With Jackson's election generally conceded, leaders of the Adams party besought Crary, an ardent Adams man, to decline the nomination. Crary agreed, provided Granger also withdrew from the Antimasonic ticket. Granger withdrew, and the Antimasons replaced him with Solomon Southwick, a bribe passer for the Bank of America. For an unexplained reason, Crary did not withdraw.

The Regency convened in high feather at Herkimer on September 12, and named Van Buren and Enos T. Throop. Van Buren came within 3,000 votes of the combined vote of Thomp-

son and Southwick. The vote for governor was Van Buren, 136,794; Thompson, 106,444; Southwick, 33,345. Throop also won. In this first popular election of presidential electors, the Jacksonians carried 18 of the 34 Congressional districts, the election being then conducted in that manner. This gave Jackson 20 of New York's 36 votes, as the majority chose 2 electors at large. In this campaign, the Adams men called themselves National Republicans; the opposition was called the Democratic-Republican. The quick transition to Democrat was foreshadowed in this excerpt from a letter from Van Buren to Jesse Hoyt, after the election: "We have succeeded in democratic counties by overwhelming votes." The name had, in fact, been fastened upon them by their enemies for more than twenty years. Van Buren resigned as governor on March 12, to serve as United States Secretary of State.

#### THE WORKING MEN'S PARTY

The state campaign of 1830 began on April 2, when the Albany leaders of the Working Men's party issued a call for a convention to meet on April 16. This party had its inception a year earlier in the demands of workers in New York City for an effective lien law for laborers on buildings and the abolishment of imprisonment for debt, and in their protest against the threat to lengthen the ten-hour day. Those who led them added these principles: "all children have equal rights to maintenance and education; all mankind, at the age of maturity, to equal property." The agrarian principle was temporarily forced upon the party by Thomas Skidmore, a printer, who presided at its first meeting. The demand for universal education, including free colleges, was the contribution of Robert Dale Owen, son of the Welsh philanthropist whose short-lived coöperative colony at New Harmony, Indiana, ended in 1827. Young Owen,

who came to these shores in 1823, took up his residence in New York in 1828. He arrived in the city with Frances Wright, whom he had met when both were working for the New Harmony experiment, and published the *Free Enquirer*, conspicuous for its attacks on church and clergy. The pair lived at 359 Broome Street, near Elizabeth Street. Like the youth she held in tow, Fanny Wright, as she called herself, was of Scotch birth. Young Owen was in his early twenties when he fell under the charm of the classic features he admired, but never loved. In later years he wrote of her: "a friend some ten years my senior, possessing . . . ideas . . . more extravagant than my own . . . [who] . . . mainly shaped, for several years, the course and tenor of my life." Of their personal relations, he wrote: "Friends; but never throughout the years we spent together, anything more." The erratic Fanny Wright impressed not only young Owen, but multitudes the country over. She assailed slavery and championed woman suffrage. Her followers organized Fanny Wright clubs and sang her praises; her enemies organized mobs and stormed her meetings. Young Owen, as leader of the Working Men's party, was her echo. A fourth founder of the Workies, as they became known, was George H. Evans, a printer, English by birth, who edited *The Man* in Ithaca before coming to New York.

In the fall of 1829, the Workies nominated a ticket in New York City. Their candidates for the Assembly, save one physician, were artisans and laborers; and one of them, Ebenezer Ford, a carpenter, polled 6,166 votes and was elected. The highest Tammany vote was little more than 11,000.

On December 29, 1829, at a meeting in New York City, the new party began to prepare for the campaign of 1830. Of the resolutions, this stands out: "Next to life and liberty, we consider education the greatest blessing bestowed on mankind." The movement was spreading, and there were flourishing groups

in upstate communities. The party now had its own paper, the *Working Man's Advocate*, nominally edited by Evans. The public regarded Fanny Wright as the editor, which pleased her, for we find this card in the *Advocate* of February 13, 1830:

Two of our subscribers have "stopped" because, they say, "It is a *Fanny Wright* paper." . . . If any others wish to decline taking the *Working Man's Advocate* for a similar reason, they may have their money returned for all in advance.

Old line politicians became apprehensive of Fanny Wright, Robert Dale Owen, and their Working Men's party; and some set out to crush it, while others sought to make use of it. When Jackson was fighting the Bank of the United States, Churchill C. Cambreleng, Van Buren's spokesman on the floor of the House of Representatives, sent an appeal to Jesse Hoyt to "get the Workies to be up and doing on the U. S. B. question," adding, in truth, "they are democrats in principles." Another follower of Van Buren, Erastus Root, speaker of the Assembly, noted for his double-dealing, made a sinister use of the Workies in his efforts to get his own party's nomination for governor. The conclusion is inescapable that Root induced his adherents to become Workies. The first evidence of his chicanery was the Albany convention of Workies which met on April 16, 1830, and nominated Root for governor. Root did not want the honor, save to impress the Regency. Miss Wright and Owen denounced the nomination as imprudent, and suggested the need of a state convention. Another circumstance supporting the conclusion is Root's silence after being chosen by the Albany Workies, and he did not utter a word until another local convention, held in New York City in June, ratified the nomination made in Albany. Then he declined, while praising some of the aims of the Workies—and who could not? The state convention was held in Salina, on August 26. Root's followers,

in a majority, unseated the New York City delegates loyal to Miss Wright and Owen, and named Root for governor and Nathaniel Pitcher for lieutenant governor. The *Advocate* of September 4 denounced the nominations as a betrayal of the Workies. On the night before this denunciation, Root's Workies held a meeting in New York City to ratify the Salina nominations. But the real Workies forced their way into the hall and defeated this move by a vote of ten to one. On September 10, Root's Workies met again and tried to exclude those of Miss Wright and Owen, but again they were outnumbered. It was not until September 14, when *bona fide* delegates of the Working Men's party met in Military Hall, on the Bowery, that a true ticket was named, with Ezekiel Williams, a tanner of the village of Auburn, for governor, and Isaac S. Smith, of Erie, for lieutenant governor. Of course Root had again withdrawn.

Two weeks before the Working Men's convention, the Antimasons met in Utica and again named Granger for governor. Samuel Stevens, who was identified with the Working Men's party, was named for second place. Subsequently, the National Republicans indorsed the nominations, as the Antimasons had adopted a platform embracing Clay's tariff program and other articles of faith of the party of Adams. The fusion gave Granger 120,361 votes, but it fell short of electing him. Governor Throop, named to succeed himself, polled 128,842. Edward P. Livingston, his running mate, was also elected. Williams polled but 2,332 votes.

The small vote for Williams showed that the Working Men's party had run its course. In New York City, he polled less than one-third of the votes cast for Ford, candidate for the Assembly in 1829, and only 317 in the rest of the state. The primary cause for the decline lay in the agnostic and anticlerical teachings of Miss Wright and Owen, which were also published in the party's organ, giving color to the charge that their fol-

lowers were infidels. Root's supporters made the party ridiculous when they stole its state convention. Tammany's abandonment of its opposition to a mechanic's lien law and to the repeal of the law providing for imprisonment for debt, together with the organization of a Whig Working Men's party in New York City, won back many to the ranks of the major parties. Internal dissension played a minor part. Unable to dominate, Skidmore formed his own party, the Agrarian party, popularly called Skidmore's party. He nominated a complete Assembly ticket in New York City; and the highest vote cast for his nominees was 147. For a while the Workies held together, but Owen abandoned them in 1832 and returned to New Harmony. He served in the Indiana legislature from 1835 to 1838; was elected to Congress in 1842 and again in 1844; was first chargé d'affaires, then minister, to Naples, under Pierce and Buchanan; and during the Civil War he served on a commission on ordnance and stores, audited claims of nearly \$50,000,000, and his letter to Lincoln advocating emancipation was more effective "in deciding the president to make his proclamation than all other communications combined," according to Salmon P. Chase. Fanny Wright continued her public activities long after she ceased to be a leader of the Workies. In 1838, she spoke for Van Buren's subtreasury bill; and in that year married M. d'Arusmont, but soon left France and her husband and returned to America with their child, with whom she lived quietly in Cincinnati.

Besides the emergence of our first woman political leader, the campaign of 1830 is also noteworthy for the introduction of a nominating convention that was proof against surprise, the invention of the Regency. A majority of the delegates who nominated Throop at Herkimer were on the public pay rolls, and the *Commercial Advertiser* of September 9 called the body "the office holders' convention."



## THE RÉGIME OF GOVERNOR MARCY

In 1832, the Antimasons boasted a national ticket composed of William Wirt, of Maryland, for president, and Amos Ellmaker, of Pennsylvania, for vice president. At their state convention in Utica on June 21, they again named Granger and Stevens, and chose an electoral ticket equally divided between Antimasons and National Republicans. Again the National Republicans approved the work of the Antimasons.

The Democratic-Republicans saw victory perched on their banner when they met in Herkimer on September 19, and nominated Marcy and John Tracy, after ratifying the national ticket of Jackson and Van Buren. But as the campaign was ending, Marcy wrote to Jesse Hoyt that the opposition would probably carry the state. "The U. S. Bank is in the field," continued Marcy, "and I cannot but fear the effect of 50 or 100 thousand dollars expended in conducting the election in such a city as New York."

The Bank's corrupt practices were reprisals for Jackson's order removing the government deposits; but they were offset by the state's indignation because of the Senate's unjust rejection of Van Buren, as minister to England. Marcy came within 2,000 of Jackson's total, his vote being 166,410. Granger polled 156,672. Before the next gubernatorial election, the Antimasonic party ceased to exist, save in the infected district. Most of its members joined the Clay party, now known as the Whig party. The Whigs convened in Utica on September 10, and nominated William H. Seward, a prominent Antimason, for governor, and Silas M. Stillwell for lieutenant governor. The Democratic-Republican convention, organized the same day in Herkimer, renominated Marcy and Tracy.

The Whig party, whose leaders were supporters of the Bank of the United States, was called by Jackson's followers the

Monster party, and the Bank party. Not to be outdone, the Whigs dubbed the opposition the Tory party, likened themselves to the Whigs of 1776, saying that, instead of George III, they fought King Andrew. The Jacksonians answered with: "Down with the aristocrats!" But the Whig revolution of 1834 failed in New York, Marcy being reelected by 181,905 votes. Seward fell short of this by 13,000. During the election, Van Buren wrote to Hoyt that he believed the Whigs would next call themselves Democrats. But before the end of Jackson's second term his followers had adopted the name.

In the fall of 1835, the Equal Rights party was born of efforts to wrest control of Tammany Hall from the bankers. When a meeting was held in the Wigwam on the night of October 29, 1835, to ratify the Tammany nominees, antibank men voted down the organization's choice for chairman. A fight ensued, and the bank element was put to flight. But before the reformers could organize the meeting, the gas was turned off. This had happened once before when the reformers had a majority, so they were prepared and nominated a ticket in the guttering light of candles and matches. The matches were called locofocos, and the next day the Equal Rights men were called Locofocos. In the spring of 1836, they nominated a candidate for mayor of New York City; on September 15, at their convention in Utica, they named Isaac L. Smith for governor, and Moses Jacques for lieutenant governor. They indorsed the free education program of Robert Dale Owen's group.

After Marcy and Tracy were renominated, the Whigs named Jesse Buel, lately editor of the *Albany Argus*, and Gamaliel H. Barstow. Marcy was not apprehensive now; Van Buren was running for president and carried the state with 166,815 votes. Marcy ran only 693 votes behind him. Buel's vote was 136,648. Smith polled 3,496. Soon after the election, the Equal Rights men returned to a bankerless Tammany. But the name Locofoco

persisted. The Whigs used it for years as an equivalent of Democrat.

#### THE VICTORIES OF SEWARD AND WRIGHT

The state election of 1837, when the people voted against the panic, and the Whigs carried 6 of the 8 senatorial districts, and 101 out of 128 Assembly districts, foreshadowed Marcy's defeat the following year. The Whigs nominated William H. Seward for governor. They were aided by a revolt of Bank Democrats, headed by Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, United States Senator. At their state convention, the Tallmadge faction in-dorsed Seward and his running mate, Luther Bradish. The vote for governor stood: Seward, 192,882; Marcy, 182,461.

Although the Whigs elected a majority to the Assembly, and 5 of the 8 candidates for the Senate, they still lacked control of the upper house by 3 votes. This prevented the Whigs from electing a United States Senator, and what was more important to Thurlow Weed, from choosing him as state printer. Other lucrative offices, eyed hungrily by Weed's followers, were retained by Democrats through the refusal of the Senate to confirm the nominations of the Whig governor. But in the fall election of 1839, Weed used, in senatorial districts where the Democrats were weak, \$8,000 received from New York. As a result, when the legislature of 1840 convened, the party of Van Buren found itself in a minority in the senate for the first time in more than two decades. As a reward for leading the Democratic revolt in 1838, Weed ordered the reelection of Tallmadge to the United States Senate, and directed the removal of all Democratic officeholders; he also made himself state printer. He had written finis to the story of the Albany Regency.

Weed was now as powerful in the Whig party as Van Buren had been in the Democratic, and was proud of the title of "Dictator." His *Albany Evening Journal*, founded as an Anti-

masonic organ, became the mouthpiece of the Whigs. He shared the unscrupulousness of Croswell, whom he succeeded as state printer. They had been boys together in Catskill and, when Croswell seemed criminally involved in a bank failure, Weed saved him from indictment. This was to be expected, for Weed had profited with Croswell in "unclean bank legislation"; when leader of the Antimasons, he accepted a \$500 bribe from James Perkins, a bank lobbyist, according to the confession of Perkins, spread on the Senate records of 1833. Although the first politician of stellar rank who made politics a source of personal profit, men of talent and integrity followed his leadership blindly.

Weed's leadership was shown at the Whig state convention when Seward was renominated by acclamation. For months, Whig and Democratic journals had denounced Seward for two paragraphs in his annual message to the legislature in which, after describing the hard lot of children of foreigners "in our populous cities and towns, and in the vicinity of our public works," he said: "I do not hesitate, therefore, to recommend the establishment of schools in which they may be instructed by teachers speaking the same language with themselves and professing the same faith." Seward's critics charged that this was a bid for Catholic votes, and was inspired by Bishop John Hughes, the Roman Catholic prelate of New York. Seward held his peace; but Weed assures us that Bishop Hughes had no hand in it, and that it was decided upon after a conference with two Protestant divines. Emulating the example of the Albany Regency, Weed sent hand-picked delegates to Utica, and no voice was raised against Seward.

To add to Van Buren's strength in New York the Democrats nominated for governor William C. Bouck, a Schoharie farmer, who had endeared himself to many thousands by his unremitting labors as canal commissioner since his appointment in March, 1821. But Bouck and Seward were almost forgotten in

the frenzy of the national campaign, in which issues gave way to abuse of Van Buren and exaltation of his opponent, the aged Gen. W. H. Harrison. The corrupt bankers, whose enmity Van Buren had earned by his three-years' fight for sound money and the subtreasury, spent money lavishly. Their prostitute press said Van Buren had brought on the panic of 1837, with its attendant misery. Typical of the appeals to workers in the Whig press is the following, from the *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*: "If you wish to be poor and trodden down, and to see your wife starving and your children in ignorance, vote for Martin Van Buren." Daniel Webster, a mercenary of the Bank of the United States, transmuted Van Buren's truthful statement that the Bank had been established by friends of the privileged orders, into a direct accusation of corruption against Washington and Madison. Harrison boldly announced his stand for paper money, and Whig orators followed Webster's lead in declaring for another charter for the Bank of the United States, controlled by Nicholas Biddle, the arch corruptionist. Van Buren's enduring achievement, the subtreasury, was the chief weapon of his opponents. The bill creating it did not become law until July 4, 1840, too late to be of any service in the campaign, whose grotesque shape was fashioned by this slur on Harrison in the *Baltimore Republican*: "Give him a barrel of hard cider, and settle a pension of two thousand a year on him, and my word for it, he will sit the remainder of his days in a log cabin." Almost overnight, log cabins arose in the streets, each with its barrel of hard cider, and raccoon skins adorned the walls. Weed started the *Log Cabin* and made Horace Greeley its editor; and Greeley filled it with crude woodcuts depicting Harrison as the hero of Tippecanoe and other battles, and with the words and music of cruder songs which marching thousands howled to the accompaniment of bands and fife-and-drum corps. As Greeley wrote: "Our opponents . . . had campaign

and other papers, good speakers and large meetings; but we were far ahead of them in singing, and electioneering emblems and mottoes." Typical of the mottoes was one borne aloft in many a Whig parade:

With Tip and Tyler  
We'll burst Van's biler.

The emblems were medals and debased currency assailing Van Buren's fiscal reforms, picturing him as a fox, or as a helpless creature of Jackson, and otherwise trying to bemean him.

Van Buren lost the state by 13,290 votes. Four years before, he had carried it by 28,272 plurality. James G. Birney, temporarily residing in the state, was the presidential candidate of the Abolitionist or Liberty party, which held a national convention in Warsaw, Genesee County, in December, 1839. The Harrison landslide reelected Seward. His vote was 222,011. Bouck polled 216,808.

Chiefly because of Seward's blunders, the Democrats regained control of the Senate and Assembly in the election of 1841; and when the Whig state convention met in Utica on October 7, 1842, Seward had declined renomination. He had alienated many when he advocated schools for children of foreigners, with teachers of their own faith. He also lost support when he told the governor of Virginia that harboring fugitive slaves in New York was not a crime, but an act "inspired by the spirit of humanity and the Christian religion." Bradish was named for governor. He was defeated by Bouck, who polled 208,072. Bradish ran 22,000 behind him.

On the eve of the Democratic national convention of 1844, William H. Hammett, a Representative from Mississippi, asked Van Buren to declare his views on Texas. Van Buren opposed annexation, and said that without Mexico's consent it would mean an unjust war. This courage cost Van Buren a second term

in the White House. When at Baltimore the vice-presidential nomination was offered to Silas Wright, after the slave power robbed Van Buren of the nomination, Wright declined to "ride behind the black pony." Thus he designated James Knox Polk, our first dark horse.

Van Buren and his followers in New York did effective work for Polk. They shelved Bouck, and persuaded Wright to resign from the United States Senate and run for governor. The Whigs nominated Millard Fillmore, an aide of Weed in the Antimasonic party. The Abolitionists nominated Alvan Stewart. The vote stood Wright, 241,090; Fillmore, 231,057; Stewart, 15,136. Polk carried the state, but ran more than 4,500 behind Wright.

Clay lost the state and the presidency because of the Abolitionist vote. Birney, again the Liberty party's choice for president, polled 15,812 in New York, more than double the vote cast for him in the entire country in 1840. Fillmore lost the state by 10,033. Clay lost it by only 5,106. Both truckled to the slave power.

Aware that Wright would not resign the governorship, Polk offered him a place in the cabinet. Subsequently, he asked Van Buren to suggest a New York man for the cabinet. This was also a gesture. Ignorant of Polk's plot, Van Buren named Azariah C. Flagg, Churchill C. Cambreleng, and his former law partner, Benjamin F. Butler, who had served ably in the cabinets of Jackson and Van Buren. Polk then invited Butler to be Secretary of War, knowing he was entitled to the State or Treasury portfolio. When the expected declination came, Polk consummated his treachery by appointing Marcy Secretary of War. Marcy had broken with Van Buren over the annexation of Texas, and his appointment was planned to strengthen the opposition to Van Burenites. At first called Conservatives, the followers of Marcy were soon known as Hunkers, because they

thought only of office. The name came from the Dutch word, *bunkerer*, and signifies a selfish person. Marcy's followers likened the Radicals, or Van Burenites, to the farmer who burns his barn to rout the rats, and called them Barnburners—an allusion to their antislavery stand. Despite the Federal jobs, the election of 1845 went against the Hunkers, the Barnburners electing twice as many Assemblymen as their opponents.

#### FACTIONS IN THE WHIG AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

At the end of the legislative session of 1846, the Hunkers accused the Barnburners of hostility to the national administration. Their immediate target was Wright, whose renomination they opposed. But Wright was renominated at Syracuse, with only 12 of the 125 delegates in the negative. Gardiner was renominated for lieutenant governor by acclamation. The Whigs had met in Utica a few days earlier, nominating John Young and Hamilton Fish. Young was spokesman of the Antirenters in the Assembly.

The Antirent movement grew out of the protest of tenant farmers against the anachronistic provisions of feudal leases. These disputes, older than the Revolution, had been settled peaceably until 1839, when Stephen Van Rensselaer died. When the heirs of the patroon attempted to collect rents in arrears, the tenant farmers routed their agents. From the Van Rensselaer manor lands in Albany and Rensselaer, the revolt spread to adjacent counties. Night riding and assassination ended when Wright declared Delaware County in a state of insurrection, on August 27, 1845. After the Whigs and Democrats named their state tickets in 1846, the Antirenters organized as a state party, convening in Albany on October 6. The convention indorsed Young, the Whig candidate for governor, and Gardiner, the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor. Wright's refusal



to pardon two Antirenters convicted of murder had made the party hostile to his candidacy.

The Native Americans also emerged as a state party in this campaign. They had begun their career of proscription in New York City when the Equal Rights movement was starting. In 1843, they elected James Harper mayor of New York City, and paraded its streets with "No Popery" banners. They named for governor Ogden Edwards, who polled 6,306 votes. But it was not until ten years after that they made their national appeal to bigotry. The Abolitionist candidate for governor, Henry Bradley, received 12,844 votes.

The Antirenters and the knifing Hunkers elected Young and Gardiner. Young's vote was 198,878; Wright's, 187,306. The Whigs carried 5 of 8 Senate districts. The Assembly contests resulted in the election of 68 Whigs, 50 Democrats, and 10 Antirenters.

Wright's opposition to the state constitutional convention of 1846 cost him many votes. This constitution gave the people a larger voice in the government. Its framers hit at the Native Americans by making naturalized citizens eligible for governor. State officers below lieutenant governor had been appointed by the legislature, and judges of the higher courts had been appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The new Constitution made all these judgeships and state officers elective, beginning with the fall of 1847. The Democrats convened in Syracuse on Wednesday morning, September 29, 1847. For five days and nights, the two factions engaged in a historic struggle. The Barnburners missed Wright's commanding presence. He had died a month before, on August 27. But the Van Burenites had able leadership in the former president's son, surnamed Prince John, and in Butler, Cambreleng, James S. Wadsworth and Preston King. On Saturday, they offered a resolution indorsing the principle of the Wilmot

proviso. This free-soil resolve was an answer to the challenge of the slave power, whose legislatures and conventions had adopted resolutions binding southern Democrats not to attend a national convention where slavery would be an issue. To avoid a record vote, the chair entertained a motion to table the resolution. After a turbulent day-and-night debate, the motion was tabled by a viva-voce vote. It was nearly three o'clock Sunday morning when Dudley W. Field, another Barnburner, offered a similar resolution. Robert H. Morris, who was in the chair, ruled that it was not in order. The Barnburners appealed from the ruling, and "a scene of indescribable tumult arose," said the *Evening Post* correspondent. "Threats, denunciation, and discordant noise, for fifteen minutes, drowned out all discussion of the question." Above the din, Wadsworth shouted: "Why this cowardice and recreancy? Are the gentlemen afraid to meet this question?" Dreading a roll call, the Hunkers left the hall. The Barnburners then issued a call for a state convention where low ward politics would not govern the deliberations.

Meanwhile, the Whigs met in Syracuse, adopted the Barnburners' free-soil resolution, and nominated a state ticket. But the Whigs were not free from division over slavery. The minority were called Cotton Whigs, or Commercial Whigs. Their opponents answered to Conscience Whigs. It is in order here to observe that the Barnburners also bore the name of Soft Shells; the Hunkers had a corresponding alias in Hard Shells.

The Barnburners met in Herkimer, on October 26. It was more than a state convention, for Barnburners from other states attended, including the author of the Wilmot proviso. The free-soil resolution, tabled at Syracuse, was unanimously adopted; also, a second resolve reciting that, as the slave states were pledged not to attend a convention which countenanced the principle of free soil, the Democrats of New York would "be

obliged to adopt a counter declaration and proclaim their determination to vote for no man, under any circumstances, who does not subscribe to the preceding resolution." The convention did not name a state ticket. The Whig candidates for the lesser state offices carried some Democratic counties by a vote of ten to one, defeating the Hunker ticket by 30,000. They also elected a majority to both the Senate and the Assembly.

As the Barnburners had a majority of the Democratic legislators in 1848, the Hunkers avoided the party's legislative caucus, held in presidential years, to issue a call for a state convention to choose delegates to the national convention. The Hunkers held an irregular meeting in Albany on January 26 and elected delegates. At the Barnburners' convention in Utica on February 16, another set of delegates was chosen.

Van Buren now began work on a defense of the Barnburner delegation. Minor changes in it were made by Samuel J. Tilden and Prince John. This document was published in April, as the traditional address of Democratic legislators at the end of the session. It was the first effective assault on slavery, and has been fairly called the corner stone of the Free Soil party. The proposed injustice of seating both delegations was rejected, Van Buren saying that if the right of the Barnburners to sit were questioned, "it must be decided, not compromised." When the Baltimore convention seated the rival delegations, the Barnburners withdrew.

At a meeting in New York City on June 6, the Barnburners described the nominations of Lewis Cass and W. C. Butler "as invalid as an Act of Congress passed after arbitrary expulsion of the members from any State." The Barnburners next held a convention in Utica, on June 22. Although the delegates listened to Van Buren's epistolary announcement of his "unchangeable determination never again to be a candidate," they unanimously nominated him. Henry Dodge, United States Senator from

Wisconsin, was nominated for vice president. The delegates then issued a call for a national convention in Buffalo on August 9.

### THE FREE SOIL PARTY

More than 30,000 Free Soil Democrats and Conscience Whigs, from most of the states, assembled in Buffalo. A mass meeting was held in a circus tent in the park opposite the courthouse, presided over by Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio. Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, was president of the convention, held in the Brick Church. A letter from Van Buren advised the delegates to abandon him if the great end of their proceedings could be better promoted, and added that the convention might be productive of "more important consequences than any which have gone before it save only that which framed the Federal Constitution." After a complimentary vote for John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, Van Buren was unanimously nominated. Hale had been nominated for president by the Abolitionists but withdrew, and the Liberty party supported Van Buren. Dodge had declined the nomination for vice president, and Charles Francis Adams was nominated by acclamation as Van Buren's running mate on the Free-Soil ticket.

The last plank of the platform read:

Resolved, That we shall inscribe on our banner, "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labour, and Free Men," and under it we will fight on, and fight ever, until a triumphant victory shall reward our exertions.

In this epoch-making canvass, the Whigs nominated Millard Fillmore for vice president, to make Zachary Taylor and his four hundred slaves less unpalatable to New York, whose vote would decide the election. At their state convention, they named Hamilton Fish and George W. Patterson. The Free Soilers chose John A. Dix and Seth Gates. The Hunkers put up Reuben H. Walworth and Charles O'Connor.



*Elias May Jr.*



*William W. Sewary,*



*Hamilton K. K. K.*



*Wm. S. Macey*



The Whigs carried the state by a minority vote, as the combined votes of Democrats and Free Soilers on both state and national tickets exceeded the Whig poll. The presidential vote was: Taylor, 218,603; Van Buren, 120,510; Cass, 114,318. The gubernatorial poll stood: Fish, 218,776; Dix, 122,811; Walworth, 116,811. It will be noted that the nominees for governor ran slightly ahead of the presidential candidates of their respective parties. Of the Assembly candidates, the Whigs elected 108; the Free Soilers, 14; the Hunkers, 6.

The campaign over, Van Buren returned to his well-earned retirement, leaving politics to Prince John. When Horatio Seymour undertook to reunite the Democrats, Prince John insisted that a compromise on the principle of free soil was impossible. Seymour's acceptance of this condition brought in the Abolitionists; and all three groups were represented on Democratic tickets, state and local, in 1849. This fusion elected four of the seven minor state officers and two-thirds of the Assembly. But the Whigs held the Senate. The union of Abolitionists and Democrats did not last; and in 1850 the Democrats nominated Seymour for governor and Sanford E. Church for lieutenant governor; the Abolitionists named William L. Chaplin and Joseph Plumb.

The Whig convention of 1850 was like the Democratic convention of 1847, even to factional labels. The Radicals were bent on a party indorsement of Seward's prescient speech in the Senate on the Clay compromise. Seward advocated the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, opposed slavery in new territory, and said that the South's threat to secede embraced

the fearful issue whether the Union shall stand and slavery be removed by gradual, voluntary effort, and with compensation; or whether the Union shall be dissolved and war ensue, bringing on violent but complete and immediate emancipation . . . That crisis . . . we must foresee.

He abjured the provocative fugitive-slave law, which Fillmore signed a week and a day before the Whigs convened in Utica. Washington Hunt, a Radical, was nominated for governor. George J. Cornell, a Conservative, was chosen for second place. Then the convention indorsed Seward's speech by a vote of 74 to 42. Francis Granger and other Conservatives bolted, and issued a call for a convention in Utica on October 17. Fillmore had sent secret orders to bolt, if Seward's speech was approved. The color of Granger's hair gave the bolters the name of Silver Grays, and they, in turn, called their opponents Woolly-Heads.

The Whig rump convention merely praised Fillmore's fugitive-slave law and decried Seward's speech. Their failure to nominate a candidate for governor astonished the uninformed. But the Castle Garden meeting of October 30 revealed Fillmore's plot to crush Hunt and the antislavery faction of his party. The proslavery speeches at this meeting, voiced in the name of Union, had the hearty indorsement of the Fillmore administration, for Secretary of State Daniel Webster sent a letter to the meeting, urging good citizens not to rekindle the fires of "useless and dangerous controversy." The gathering appointed a campaign committee which promoted the candidacy of Seymour and other proslavery men. Cornell, of course, was the Unionist choice for lieutenant governor.

For four weeks, the election for governor was in doubt. It was thought Hunt had met the fate of Cornell, who lost the lieutenant governorship by 8,000 votes. The final tabulation showed Hunt's election by 262 votes. The treachery behind this slim majority and in Cornell's defeat was manifest in the legislative contests, the Whigs electing 17 of the 32 senators, and 82 of the 128 assemblymen. To ascribe Hunt's election to his popularity is to ignore two factors—the Antirenters, whose ticket he headed, and more important still, the Abolitionists, whose candidate for governor received only 3,416 votes, a small



fraction of the party's strength. The major part of the Abolitionist vote went to Hunt and Church.

In this election, party labels lost more of their traditional significance. A president covertly bolted his party's nominee for governor in his own state, and the ranking member of his cabinet, residing in another state, openly counseled defeat. Men were supported without respect to party. No longer could one write, as did De Witt Clinton in his *Hibernicus*, that "the whole controversy is about office." It was a still further cry from the days of Clinton's uncle, governor for twenty-one years, chiefly because of himself. Van Buren, born in the sixth year of George Clinton's governorship, had seen the great change. He had participated in the struggles of the Clintons and the Livingstons, first against the Federalists and their aristocratic concepts, next against Burr and his ambitions, and finally among themselves. All this was before universal suffrage—which he had opposed. Then came the Albany Regency, mother of officeholders' conventions and group control of party affairs. He saw these, and their elder foster brother, the spoils system, wander over the land. He saw these strands of New York's tangled skein of politics—the phrase is Marcy's—thrust aside by principle. And it did not take a Van Buren to discern the new day, whose red dawn was fated with the landing of the first black on our shores.

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— IV —

NEW YORK'S PARTICIPATION IN THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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## NEW YORK'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

### THE FEDERALIST PERIOD

IN the actual drafting of the Constitution of the United States, as has been seen in a previous chapter, New York played no conspicuous part. In the struggle over the ratification of that document, nowhere was the contest closer than in the Empire State. So strong were the Antifederalists in the legislature, that they created a deadlock in the choice of presidential electors and United States Senators. They were even able, also, to force through a call for a new convention, to make alterations in the régime already set up. But despite all these things, no state was to contribute more vitally through its public men to the operation of the new government. It might be regarded as symbolic of that influence that it was in New York City that the first Congress of the United States convened, in New York City that George Washington took the oath of office as President of the United States, and in New York City that the Supreme Court of the United States was to hold its initial sessions.

It was in the executive and judicial branches of the new government that New York was to be most brilliantly represented. To the lower house of the first national legislature, the Empire State sent six representatives, some of them men of means and influence, but none of them destined to play decisive rôles. In the Senate, when the legislative deadlock which delayed the elections was broken, appeared Rufus King, a substantial figure, a member from Massachusetts of the late Constitutional Convention, a vigorous proponent of the Constitution in the ratifying convention in that state, and just lately removed to New York City; and beside King, one of the great

feudal overlords of the Hudson Valley, General Philip Schuyler, eminent in war, less strikingly able in the arts of peace. These men were to bear a useful part in the large work immediately ahead.

But in the other branches of the government, New York stood out more conspicuously. To the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Washington appointed John Jay, one of the most respected of the Federalist group, well-to-do, allied with the other great families of the state, with a distinguished public career as a member of the Congress, as a negotiator of the treaty of peace with Great Britain, as Secretary of State under the Confederation, as the vigorous supporter of the new régime itself. And to the important post of Secretary of the Treasury, no doubt in the eyes of contemporaries the most important in the executive department, came another New Yorker in the person of Alexander Hamilton. At the time of his nomination to this important office, Hamilton was only thirty-two years old. Related through his marriage to Elizabeth Schuyler to one of the great families of the state, with a mind extraordinarily vigorous and logical, strong in the trust and confidence of the President, under whom he had served in the Revolutionary War, with a reputation enhanced through his brilliant campaign in behalf of the new Constitution in the New York State ratifying convention, Hamilton brought to the office to which he was called a consistent political philosophy, a genius for financial affairs, and a concrete program for the consolidation of the new régime. Through his person, indeed, New York was to have a dominant influence in the first years of the national government.

The program which he submitted to the first Congress, and which was enacted into law, was, no doubt, conceived in the interest of the financial and commercial classes of which he was invariably the spokesman. It has sometimes been criticized



on these grounds. But, whatever else may be said of it, it brought to the support of the new government powerful political and economic interests, as Hamilton intended that it should. And, if one may judge by the votes of the New York members of Congress, it represented on the whole the predominant political opinion of New York State.

What were the principal points in this program? The first was the funding of the debt of the United States, the vindication of the public faith, as Hamilton would have called it; the second was the assumption by the Federal government of the state debts; the third was the establishment of a national bank; the fourth was the establishment of a revenue system which should supply the new government with adequate funds for the payment of its expenses, the interest on the public debt, and the establishment of a sinking fund, and which should, by its incidence, bring home the existence and power of the national authority to the people.

The first and second of these measures were ably dealt with in the famous report on the *Public Credit of the United States*, published on January 9, 1790. The redemption of the debt, and the assumption by the Federal government of the state debts incurred in the common cause of the Revolution, would, Hamilton argued, be of the greatest utility to the country as a whole. For, in countries where the national debt was funded, the Secretary declared, the stock answered most of the purposes of money, and thus increased the amount of fluid capital. Thus trade, agriculture and manufactures were all stimulated; the rate of interest declined; and an accession of prosperity resulted.

The views herein set forth, and the proposals which they supported, came before Congress in the winter session of 1790-91. They soon became the center of a vigorous discussion. With regard to the funding of the debt of the Confederation, there was

virtually no disagreement; the only important dissent from the recommendations of the Secretary of the Treasury came on the question of whether the same treatment should be accorded to the original holders and to the ultimate purchasers of such obligations. In behalf of a less liberal treatment of ultimate purchasers, James Madison waged a vigorous battle on the floor of the House of Representatives. But even here the Secretary prevailed. Madison's amendment to the bill was defeated, 36 to 13, and on this question Hamilton's fellow citizens of New York all stood by their great political associate.

But the question of the assumption of the state debts was naturally more bitterly contested. Some of the representatives of the states with small state debts were opposed to the project, as imposing upon them an additional burden; and many members of Congress objected to a measure which, as they viewed it, unnecessarily increased, by about 50 per cent, the size of the national debt. The debate was long and vigorous, and in the House of Representatives, on April 12, assumption was defeated by a vote of 31 to 29. But Hamilton was not the man to take a beating easily. He found a means to snatch victory from defeat by one of the most famous logrolling compromises in the history of the Federal government. Meeting Thomas Jefferson, the Secretary of State, before the door of the President's house, he walked him to and fro, appealing to him to use his influence in support of the administration, and in behalf of a measure whose failure might mean the secession of the northern states. The result was a famous dinner, at which, in part through the urging of Jefferson, two members of the Virginia delegation bound themselves to vote for assumption; in exchange, the Secretary of the Treasury engaged to secure the votes for the establishment of the national capital on the banks of the Potomac. Thus the assumption amendment was successfully passed through the House, by a vote of 32 to 29. In the Senate, the

whole funding program had already been accepted by the close vote of 14 to 12.

In the struggle over the funding question, Hamilton secured no unqualified support from the New York members of Congress. In the Senate, it is true, Schuyler and King wholeheartedly sustained the administration; but in the House of Representatives three of the six Congressmen from New York voted against the assumption amendment, its principal support coming, as might be expected, from the two representatives of the capitalist interests in New York City.

Next in importance to the funding and assumption measures in Hamilton's fiscal program was the establishment of a national bank, in which the government should have an interest, and which should be used as a depository for government funds. In this project, it is interesting to note, the Secretary had the unqualified adhesion of the New York members of the national legislature. In many quarters vigorously contested, the bill was approved by every New York member in House and Senate.

Two other legislative achievements should be mentioned here in connection with the work of Hamilton. One is the measure enacted in 1792 for the establishment of a sinking fund; the other is the excise law of March 3, 1791. The first needs no explanation, and its wisdom is apparent; the second, levying a tax on liquor, was in accord with the desire of the Secretary to make the strong arm of the government everywhere felt. The scanty records of the first Congress do not permit us to determine the vote of the New York members of Congress on the excise; but it was certainly the most unpopular and the least successful of all the Secretary's measures. It was, before long, much modified; even so, it produced a discontent which culminated in armed resistance; and it never yielded a considerable revenue. It is, however, in its fiscal incidence, thoroughly characteristic of the economic theory of its author. His theory of

protection to American manufactures will be dealt with elsewhere.

The domestic policy of the Washington administration was of the first significance in the history of the United States, and it was largely framed, as has been seen, by a New York man. In the field of foreign policy, also, New York was to play an important rôle. The knottiest problems which confronted General Washington in this field were those connected with the French Revolution, or rather those connected with the outbreak of a world war in Europe. By American conservatives, such as Alexander Hamilton and Gouverneur Morris, the New York man who represented the United States at the Tuileries, the French Revolution in its progress had been regarded with increasing detestation. Morris, indeed, had actually had a hand in the attempted escape of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in June of 1791, and his dispatches reveal the most striking aristocratic prejudice. But to simpler men, in New York State as elsewhere, the cause of France was the cause of republicanism and liberty, all the more attractive, perhaps, when, in February, 1793, Great Britain, the oppressor of little more than a decade before, was added to the number of France's foes. Amidst a tempest of popular feeling, the Washington administration attempted to steer the prudent course of neutrality.

In favor of such a policy, at least in principle, the members of the administration were united. Hamilton and Jefferson, the Secretary of State, equally deprecated war; and both approved the famous proclamation drawn up by John Jay, and promulgated on April 19, 1793, which has served as a model of neutrality proclamations ever since. But when concrete questions arose, the two great rivals in Washington's cabinet no longer saw eye to eye. When a minister from the French republic, Citizen Genêt, arrived in the United States, Hamilton desired that he be received with the reservation that the United States no longer

recognized the binding force of the treaty of alliance made by it with royalist France; Jefferson contended, successfully, for his unqualified reception. But the grossly undiplomatic conduct of Genêt, in attending public meetings, criticising the administration, and fitting out privateers in the ports of the United States, created further difficulties; and, while Jefferson did finally ask for his recall, the pressure toward this end must have come from men of other views, and especially from Hamilton. Before the end of 1793, the rivalry of Washington's two principal advisers had led to the resignation of the Virginian.

In the meantime, our relations with Great Britain were rapidly growing worse. There were many unliquidated issues arising from the treaty of peace, while Great Britain's treatment of American neutral commerce and of American seamen was arousing a very decided irritation in the United States. Resolutions sponsored by Madison, looking to commercial retaliation, were introduced in Congress in the spring of 1794. But, despite the existence of valid causes of complaint, there were powerful economic interests aligned in favor of an understanding, rather than a breach, with Great Britain. The representatives of the merchant class, indeed, despite arbitrary British action on the seas, were more intent upon a commercial treaty than upon a redress of grievances. It was this class, of course, that Hamilton represented, and in the spring of 1794 the rumor began to go about that he was to be appointed special envoy to London. But the opposition to his appointment was so intense that he was obliged to withdraw his name from consideration, suggesting to the President that of John Jay. Washington acted upon this suggestion and, after confirmation by a close vote in the Senate, Jay set out for England. The treaty which he there negotiated has been variously judged. His negotiations were not made easier by the all-too-reassuring language as to American purposes which Hamilton addressed to Hammond, the British minister

at Philadelphia, and he himself was perhaps more yielding than he needed to be. On questions of neutral rights, he conceded much to Great Britain, and on matters of commerce he secured only grudging and incomplete concessions, and accepted a restriction on the export of important articles of American commerce, such as cotton. The result was a tremendous outburst of indignation in the United States, especially, of course, among the Francophiles. It was only by the bare constitutional majority of two-thirds that the Jay compact was approved by the Senate at the end of June, 1795, and then only after the obnoxious twelfth article, restricting American exports, had been stricken out. One of its principal opponents in the Senate had been Senator Aaron Burr of New York, who in 1791 had succeeded to the seat held by Schuyler.

Shortly after action in the Senate, the terms of the treaty leaked out and became known to the general public. Popular emotion now rose to fever heat. In New York City, attempting to defend the pact, Hamilton was stoned by a mob. In Philadelphia, the treaty was violently denounced. In the South, it was the object of much dislike. When the House of Representatives was called upon to pass legislation necessary to its execution, it did so only after an acrimonious debate. The members of the House from New York were divided; even in his own state John Jay, who had been elected governor during his absence abroad and took office as governor July 1, before the publication of the treaty, found his work the subject of bitter condemnation.

The debates on the Jay treaty illustrate with great vividness the strong partisan antagonisms which were being imported into American politics. These antagonisms, indeed, had been growing from the days of the Hamilton fiscal program. There would have been a party battle in 1792 if Washington, in part because of the urging of Hamilton, had not consented to be a

candidate for a second term. As it was, a clear-cut partisan division presented itself in the vote for Vice President, the Hamiltonians, or Federalists, as they called themselves, voting once more for John Adams, the Republicans, as the anti-fiscal party was now known, for George Clinton, of New York. In 1796, the division was even clearer. By a majority of only three votes, John Adams became President, and Thomas Jefferson, the leader of the Republicans, Vice President.

From September, 1795, when Hamilton resigned his post in the Treasury, up to and indeed beyond the election of Jefferson, no New York man figured prominently in the administrative side of the Federal government. But Hamilton, though out of office, was still a tremendous political force, and his personality continued to influence political events. His successor at the Treasury, Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, took much advice from him; the *Farewell Address* delivered by Washington in September, 1796, owes much to his inspiration, though Jay had a hand in its composition; and even the impending retirement of his great patron from the political scene could not put an end to his activities. In the campaign of 1796, he played a devious rôle, giving no hearty support to Adams, the Federalist candidate; and once the New Englander had become President, he constantly intrigued with members of the cabinet to determine the policies of the new administration. When relations with France became strained in 1797, owing to the insulting refusal of the French government to receive our envoys, and its attempt to extort a bribe from them, Hamilton was one of those most determined on war. Always ambitious for military glory, he pressed for the creation of a Federal army, and, when such an army was constituted, secured for himself a most important military appointment, second only to that of Washington. When Adams made peace with France, the New Yorker was one of his most virulent critics, and the letters which he wrote

in violent condemnation of the President, while not meant for publication, soon saw the light through the chance agency of Burr, and did real damage to the Federalist cause in the elections of 1800.

In the meantime, an important domestic issue had arisen. In 1798, the Federalists, in violent reaction against foreign agitation, lengthened the period for naturalization and passed the famous Alien and Sedition Laws, suppressing criticism of the administration. The Republicans countered with a vigorous assault upon this unwarranted extension of the powers of the Federal government, and the legislatures of Virginia and Kentucky, at the instigation of Jefferson and Madison, passed the famous Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, asserting the right of the states to protest against, and if need be to "interpose" against, such an abuse of power. In New York State, as elsewhere, the strife of parties was well exhibited in the discussions on the laws. When Judge Jedediah Peck, of Otsego, was arrested for having put his name to a petition requesting the repeal of the obnoxious laws, and brought to New York City under indictment, the Republicans made his journey thither the occasion for tumultuous demonstrations. On the other hand, when John Jay, now governor, transmitted to the New York legislature the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, the Federalist majority promptly took issue with the views therein set forth, affirming the constitutional doctrine that the construction of Federal laws rested not with the states, but with the judiciary.

Partisan skirmishes on the subject of the Sedition Laws were the prelude to the great electoral contest of 1800, in which Jefferson and Adams were pitted against each other for the presidency. As in many presidential elections to come, the vote of New York was vital, and might be decisive; and, since the electors were chosen by the legislature, the election of that body was the central problem. It was the Republicans who were



victorious. A coalition of the Livingston and Clinton factions of the party paved the way for electoral success, and in New York City Aaron Burr, a rising member of the party, who had already served a term as United States Senator (1791-97), systematically organized the voters, and secured one of the first triumphs of modern electoral methods with the aid of the Tammany Society. Great, indeed, was the distress of the Federalists, and especially of Hamilton. Animated by partisan zeal, Hamilton now made to John Jay, still governor, one of the most extraordinary of political proposals; he suggested that Jay call the old Federalist legislature together, and have it arrange the legislative choice of electors by districts which would insure a sufficient number of votes to prevent Jefferson's success. Years later, to the eternal honor of Jay, there was found in his papers the letter of the great Federalist, and on it in Jay's handwriting the words, "This is a measure for party purposes which I think it would not become me to adopt."

In the events immediately to follow, however, Hamilton acquitted himself better. Under the terms of the Constitution as it then read, a single ballot was cast for President and Vice President together; he who received the most votes was to be President, he who received the second largest number, Vice President. But in the election of 1800, Jefferson and Aaron Burr, his Republican running mate, received exactly the same number, and the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. Here the Federalists controlled, and there were those among them who were willing to defeat the clear purpose of the electors, and make Burr President. Hamilton opposed this proposal, and while the wiser heads of the Federalist party in Congress might in any case have rejected so discreditable a scheme, his influence deserves to be noted. His strong personal dislike of Jefferson was not permitted to override more important considerations.

## THE VIRGINIA DYNASTY AND NEW YORK

The new administration of Thomas Jefferson brought to the vice presidency, as we have seen, the New Yorker, Aaron Burr. For thirty-two out of the eighty-four years to follow, New York was to be represented in that office. But in the cabinet and in Congress, the scepter of power passed to the South, and, though New York had now become Democratic-Republican, in the main, it exerted less influence on the national counsels than it had in the previous decade. Its defeated Federalist group became a discredited faction. In Congress, such Federalists as Gaylord Griswold, of Herkimer, offered a partisan opposition to the great measure of Jefferson's first administration, the purchase of Louisiana; and though they were impotent, and a feeble minority in New York's state representation (with eight Republicans in the House, and the Republican De Witt Clinton and Theodorus Bailey in the Senate), their attitude illustrated the factiousness into which Federalism had fallen. It was not the leaders of New York Federalism, however, who were primarily responsible for the discreditable intrigue of 1804. Timothy Pickering and others of New England were dreaming of a new political alignment, which might look toward the formation of a northern confederacy, and they hoped to make the instrument of their plans none other than the Republican Vice President, who, within a year of taking office, had broken with the administration. In the campaign of 1804, in which Burr stood for the governorship, they gave him support. The wiser heads among the New Yorkers, such as Rufus King and Alexander Hamilton, discouraged the Federalist intrigue and looked with suspicion upon Burr; and it was Hamilton's virulent attacks upon Burr which led to the famous duel, and to the tragic death of the great financial genius of Federalism on the rocky heights of Weehawken.

In the election itself Burr was defeated, and there followed an episode in his career around which romantic legends have clustered and which is surely one of the most extraordinary in the history of the Republic. Returning to Washington in the fall of 1804 for the final session of the Senate in his vice-presidential term, Burr took leave of that body in a speech of great dignity and power, and before long set out for the West. The tangled web of intrigue which he now wove has long puzzled the historian. It used to be believed that he aimed at the separation of the West from the Union; but it seems more probable that his real purpose was to undertake a military expedition against Mexico, a step all the more likely to be feasible in view of the strained relations of the United States with Spain. Comfort Tyler, of Onondaga, was one of his important lieutenants. Burr's aims were brought to the attention of the administration, and on November 27, 1806, President Jefferson issued a proclamation which led to his arrest. There followed the famous trial at Richmond, Virginia, which lasted for five months, and brought to the capitol of the state men of eminence from all over the Union. Burr was acquitted, but his political career was over, and so this brilliant, but self-centered, man passes from the stage.

The disgrace of Burr, however, did not mean that New York was compelled, at the end of Jefferson's first term, to relinquish the vice presidency. Instead, on the ticket with Jefferson ran the venerable George Clinton, and so great was the popularity of the administration that the Democratic-Republican candidates were elected by an electoral vote of 162 to 14. The importance of securing the support of the New York political leaders was further attested when, in 1806, the President appointed Brockholst Livingston to be a Justice of the Supreme Court.

And now came critical events, of no less interest to New

York than to the nation at large. The first term of Jefferson had been relatively tranquil, so far as foreign affairs were concerned; in the second, the President found himself compelled to grapple with problems of neutrality even more difficult, perhaps, than those which had vexed the administration of Washington. American interests and rights were flouted by both belligerents, and the administration, reluctant to wage war, yet equally reluctant to submit without question, turned to the President's cherished weapon of commercial coercion. Limited nonimportation, as against Great Britain, was voted in November, 1806, and thirteen months later the drastic measure of the embargo totally suspended our trade with the nations of the Old World. For this extraordinary measure, and for those necessary to enforce it, Jefferson's New York supporters in Congress for the most part voted. But that the measure worked great hardship was clear, and that it tempted to evasion was even clearer, as has been shown in a previous chapter. All along the New York border, smuggling became almost a profession, and Lake Champlain in particular became the center of a prosperous, if illicit, trade. The government made vigorous efforts to stop the evil, even resorting to force against the smugglers, and on at least one occasion something like a pitched battle took place. But in course of time the discontent worked its own remedy, and one of the last acts of Jefferson's administration was the repeal of the embargo, and the substitution of a milder act which restricted American trade in less drastic fashion. Never until the days of the Volstead Act was New York to offer so striking an example of popular disregard for a Federal law.

The discontent evoked by the administration's policy was reflected in the presidential campaign of 1808. The Federalists scored large gains; and in the Empire State De Witt Clinton, the ambitious nephew of Vice President Clinton, sought to

capitalize this discontent against the candidate of the Republican caucus, James Madison, and to commit the New York electors to his uncle for the presidency itself. The effort was only partially successful; the legislature, instead of instructing the electors, gave them a free hand, and only six of them voted for the elder Clinton. The rest obeyed the principle of party regularity, and the venerable New York Republican was once more obliged to content himself with the second place.

In the events leading up to the War of 1812, the public sentiment of New York was deeply divided. In the Congress which was finally to react against the policy of patience and to declare war against Great Britain, there were New Yorkers who felt as strongly as Calhoun and Clay, conspicuous among them being Peter B. Porter, of Buffalo; but in the vote on the declaration of war itself, both the House and the Senate delegations were evenly divided, and not only Federalists, but Republicans, were numbered among those who opposed the administration. Once again, moreover, the policy pursued at Washington furnished the means for promoting the personal ambitions of leading New Yorkers. The death of George Clinton, in the spring of 1812, left the younger Clinton in a position of great influence. This extraordinary man, scholar, administrator, philanthropist and politician, now aimed at nothing less than the presidency. While thus benefiting, on the one hand, from the discontent at the weakness of the chief executive, Clinton sought, on the other hand, to exploit the discontent of the Federalists with the war itself; and in this course he was brilliantly successful. Though opposed by the New Yorker, Rufus King, he secured the indorsement of most of the Federalist leaders. A rising politician named Martin Van Buren associated himself with his cause, and worked hard for his election. But though the electoral vote of New York State was thus secured, and though the New England states, with the exception of Vermont, voted for

Clinton, James Madison was reëlected. The vote in the electoral college was 128 to 89.

The rôle of New York in the war itself has been treated elsewhere in this history. It will suffice to say here that De Witt Clinton himself atoned for the equivocations of his presidential campaign by the vigor and force which, as mayor of New York City, he brought to the prosecution of the struggle; and that a New York man, John Armstrong, allied with the family of the Livingstons, discharged during more than two years of the conflict the functions of Secretary of War. Armstrong's administration has often been judged with severity, in part, no doubt, justly; but it is at least to be said of him that he brought into prominence leaders like Scott, Brown and Jackson, among the most successful military figures of the conflict.

The closing years of the Madison administration were years of increasing nationalism. The partisans of more extended powers for the Federal government came once more into the ascendancy; and, the recharter of the first national bank having been defeated in 1811 (as it happened, by the casting vote of Vice President George Clinton, in the Senate), a second national bank was created by the act of 1816. By a curious irony, the Federalist Senator, Rufus King, was found in opposition to this measure, while Republican members of the House of Representatives from New York voted in many instances in its favor. The trend toward the extension of Federal power was even more strikingly exhibited in the vote on the tariff bill of 1816, the first tariff in which protection for manufactures was admittedly the dominant purpose; and for this bill the New York delegation in Congress voted almost unanimously, thus displaying tendencies and revealing the existence of economic interests which were to play a powerful rôle in New York politics for a long time to come. Still a third measure of centralization received the ardent support of the New Yorkers in Congress.

When Calhoun proposed an ambitious program of internal improvements at Federal expense, the representatives from the state voted for this measure almost as unitedly as they had for the tariff law. There was to be a reaction against this kind of thing before many years, skillfully developed and crystallized by a leading New Yorker; but in the nationalist ardor of the years after the War of 1812, the tide ran strongly toward extension of Federal activities.

In the administrations of James Monroe, New York men were not conspicuous, though the Vice President, Daniel D. Tompkins, elected for Monroe's two terms, was, it is true, a New Yorker, and Smith Thompson served in the cabinet. In the many important executive decisions of the period, the treaty of 1818 with Great Britain, the acquisition of the Floridas, the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine, New York had no great part. But in the great constitutional and sectional issue which falls athwart the middle of the era of good feeling, the contrary was the case. The story of the Missouri Compromise is very decidedly germane to the subject of this chapter.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the slavery question played a relatively unimportant rôle in the deliberations of Congress. But the situation was changed when, in 1819, a bill for the admission of Missouri appeared in the House of Representatives. It was a New York man, James Tallmadge, Jr., who offered an amendment to this measure forbidding the further introduction of slaves into Missouri, and providing that all children of slaves born in the state after its admission should be born free, but might be held to service up to the age of twenty-five years. By a vote of 79 to 67, the Tallmadge proposal was adopted, despite the warm opposition of many members and the eloquence of Henry Clay, and for it almost the whole New York delegation voted. But the Senate refused to concur, and the bill was lost. Immediately there arose a mighty

outburst of feeling in the North. Between the adjournment of Congress in March, 1819, and its reassembling in December, the antislavery cause was warmly championed by the public opinion of the free states. In November, in New York City, a meeting attended by 2,000 persons passed resolutions looking to the exclusion of slavery from Missouri. When the legislature met in January, by a unanimous vote of both houses it went on record as supporting the proposition of Tallmadge. In Congress, the debates of the beginning of the session of 1819 and 1820 took place chiefly in the Senate. There the Southern members attached to a bill for the admission of Maine an amendment looking to the admission of Missouri without restriction. There followed a long-remembered and dramatic debate, in which one of the principal figures was Senator Rufus King, of New York. King had been elected to the Senate in 1813, and reëlected, after a legislative deadlock, in 1820. A Federalist, he commanded the respect of many Republicans. And now, in a great speech, he denounced the extension of slavery with such effect that, to quote John Quincy Adams, "the great slave-holders gnawed their lips and clenched their fists as they listened to him." In a sense, King battled in vain. After days of discussion, the Senate adopted the famous compromise amendment by which all the rest of the territory north of 36° 30' was dedicated to freedom. The struggle was now transferred to the House. Should the compromise be accepted, or should it not? The members from New York in most instances answered with a determined No. Yet when the Senate amendment permitting slavery in Missouri was finally adopted, March 2, 1820, by a vote of 90 to 87, two Congressmen from the state voted for the bill. Without their accession the measure would have been defeated.

Important as the slavery debates of 1820 actually were as an expression of Northern feeling, and as an augury of the future, the country, after the adoption of the Compromise, relapsed



into political tranquillity. The old party lines had now virtually disappeared. The election of 1824 was fought on personal, rather than party, differences. No election, however, holds greater elements of interest. There were four candidates in the field, Crawford, the Secretary of the Treasury; John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State; Henry Clay; and Andrew Jackson. In New York State, sentiment was much divided. An important group of politicians headed by Martin Van Buren, now in the national Senate, were for Crawford. So, too, were most of New York's representatives in Congress. On the other hand, this very fact created a strong sentiment against Crawford on the part of the foes of Van Buren. When the legislature met to chose the presidential electors (such, as we have seen, was the custom in New York), an immense amount of pulling and hauling took place. The final result, reflecting a party bargain rather than public opinion, was the election of 25 Adams men, 7 Clay men, and 4 Crawford men. In his *Autobiography*, Thurlow Weed explains how, by secretly printing a split ticket and by promising electors to Clay, in case they could be used effectively, he gained control of enough electoral votes to make John Quincy Adams President. For, there being no choice in the electoral college after the votes of all the states had been counted, the names of the three highest candidates were balloted upon by the House of Representatives. These three candidates were Crawford, Jackson and Adams. But had Crawford not received the four votes given him by New York, it would have been Clay and not Crawford whose name would have come before the House. And there, in view of his great popularity, the Speaker might have been elected. New York's decision excluded Clay from the presidency.

In the balloting in the House itself, moreover, New York played an important rôle. The election of Adams required the support of thirteen states. Twelve states were almost certain,

but New York was doubtful. Of its congressional representation of 34, 17 were for Adams, 16 were unqualifiedly opposed to him, and one, Stephen Van Rensselaer, was doubtful. It was the decision of the patroon to give his vote to the New Englander, made at the last moment, after much wavering and almost by accident, which finally brought about the latter's election.

#### OLD HICKORY AND HIS NEW YORK FRIENDS

The election of 1825 ushered in a President whose whole term was hardly more than a prolonged electoral campaign, looking to the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency. In the maneuvering of these four years, a great New York politician, later to be a genuine statesman, played an important part. Martin Van Buren, as has been seen, had been rising into prominence in New York State for some time. He had, though first a supporter of Clinton, finally attached himself to the anti-Clintonian wing of the New York Republicans; he had thoroughly mastered the technic of the spoils system, now an established practice in New York State; and he had been elected to the Senate in 1821. Before the term of Adams had been far advanced, the doughty little New Yorker was a recognized leader of the Jacksonians. When the President sent a mission to the Congress of American Nations at Panama in 1826, Van Buren took up the cudgels against the measure, shrewdly capitalizing American sentiment against entangling alliances. Gauging the fact that there was a reaction against the expenditure of large sums by the Federal government on internal improvements, Van Buren identified himself thoroughly with this point of view. And, on the thorny question of the tariff, he played a devious game with the interests of Jackson always in mind.

On the tariff question, indeed, he was, if Henry Clay is to be believed, responsible for one of the most extraordinary political maneuvers in the history of Congress. The ranks of the Jacksonians were by no means united on the question of protection. In New York, and in the West, protectionist sentiment prevailed. The South, on the other hand, was decidedly in favor of lower duties. Accordingly, an ingenious plan was framed to satisfy both sections in some measure, and to put the odium of defeating a tariff bill on New England where Old Hickory had very little support. The plan was this: a bill was framed, carrying high duties on the products of the West, but neglecting the claims of New England. All amendments to this bill in the House were to be resisted by the Jacksonians. Then, on the final vote, it was expected that the Southerners and the New Englanders would defeat the measure. Thus, in the North, the Adams men would be in the position of having balked the claims of the West; and in the South, capital could be made out of the fact that no tariff bill at all had been passed. The only difficulty with this plan was that it was too ingenious by half. The measure passed both houses, and ironically enough, in the Senate, pleading the instructions of the state legislature, Martin Van Buren went on record in the affirmative. Thus "the tariff of abominations" was adopted with the support of New York.

It needed no such elaborate maneuvering on the tariff, in all probability, to determine the issue of the campaign of 1828. The rising democracy of the West, and the political leaders of the South, rallied to the cause of Andrew Jackson; New York gave him a small but adequate plurality; and when the new administration took office in March, 1829, it was known that Martin Van Buren was to occupy the office of Secretary of State.

The advent of Old Hickory to power has been treated properly as an epoch in the history of the Federal government,

as a significant step in the development of democratic, as opposed to aristocratic, conceptions in government. In New York State, as elsewhere, it was the masses who shouted for the hero of New Orleans, and the masses who hoped to benefit from his election. For some years before his advent into the presidency, indeed for a long political generation, the spoils system had been a feature of New York politics, and appointments and removals on the basis of partisanship had not been unknown at Washington. But the purge which the government underwent under Jackson in 1829 was, none the less, something novel. And moreover, "rotation in office," as it was called, was defended as a beneficent democratic principle. In these events, Martin Van Buren had a prominent, indeed one might almost say, a decisive rôle. Schooled in the spoils politics of New York, he saw no reasons why the same system should not be applied in Washington.

Yet Van Buren was no mere office broker. His administration of the State Department was distinctly creditable. There were no major diplomatic issues, it is true. But he settled a dispute of long standing with Great Britain over the West Indian trade, and in his contacts with foreign diplomats, bore himself well, and made himself very decidedly respected and liked. At all times, he retained the confidence of his chief, who, long before his first term was over, had determined to make the New Yorker his successor in the presidency.

Van Buren's increasing importance, however, led to more and more violent attacks upon him by the supporters of Vice President Calhoun. He was accused of having intrigued against the South Carolinian, and in the summer of 1830 he persuaded the President to accept his resignation. Appointed minister to Great Britain, he sailed for his post in August. There followed an act of private vengeance on the part of Calhoun, which reacted against its author. When the Senate met in December,

Van Buren's appointment was submitted to it. By the casting vote of the Vice President, it was rejected. The result of this maneuver was only to strengthen the New Yorker, who was himself nominated for the vice presidency on the ticket with Jackson in 1832.

In the meantime, stirring battles were being fought in Washington. The anti-Jacksonians, now coming to be known as Whigs, imprudently brought forward, on the eve of the presidential campaign, a bill for the recharter of the national bank. The measure was passed, New York's two senators voting against it, and her delegation in the House being divided, eleven for and fifteen against. But when the President sent in his veto, the votes could not be found to override it. Jackson and Van Buren went into the campaign of 1832, strong in their appeal to the popular prejudice against concentrated wealth. But this prelude to the electoral battle of 1832 was no more exciting than its sequel. In the spring session, a tariff bill had been enacted, modifying in some respects the measure of 1828, but strongly protectionist in its general flavor. South Carolina, discontented ever since 1828, now flatly proclaimed the doctrine of nullification. The crisis was met with boldness by the President, who challenged the new dogma with soldierlike directness, and demanded of Congress authority to enforce the laws. At the same time, the forces of compromise made themselves felt in Congress, and a new tariff measure, for a sliding-scale reduction of duties, was brought forward by Henry Clay. Both these measures passed at the close of the session, and the crisis was dispelled. New York's representatives voted almost unanimously for the force bill, but preponderantly against the compromise tariff. Van Buren, the master politician, was in Albany during this critical period, and seems to have exercised no direct influence on the solution of the problem.

In the second administration of General Jackson, the New

Yorker who now sat in the vice presidential chair, though enjoying close and confidential relations with the White House, played no decisive rôle in policy. The victory of 1832 embittered and emboldened the President in his struggle with the Bank of the United States, and in the course of the next year he embarked upon the drastic course of withdrawing the government deposits. Van Buren was not enthusiastic about this policy, when it was first proposed; he sought at one time to postpone action; but the old General's imperious will determined it. In one other matter, the Vice President's influence was more important. Old Hickory was determined that the New Yorker should be his successor; and this fact must have had much to do with the policy of the administration with regard to Texas. In the revolt of this Mexican province against the central government, the administration sought to maintain a cautious neutrality; and when the victory of San Jacinto determined the independence of the new state, recognition was, with equal caution, withheld until after the election of 1836.

In the preparations for the electoral struggle of that year, and in the campaign itself, Van Buren behaved with dignity, and with considerable candor. The suavity of this most interesting man has led uninformed or hostile critics to believe that he was without convictions. The facts do not bear out this view. In his term as Vice President, he faced without flinching a most embarrassing vote on a minor phase of the slavery question, voting in favor of the South. In his declaration of principles in the summer of 1836, he not only expressed himself clearly on the issues involved, but took leave to differ with his patron, Jackson, on one point, that of distributing the governmental surplus to the states; and to differ with the views of many persons in his own state on another, that of abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. No one can say that his victory in the election of 1836 was won by a campaign of "non-committalism."

As President of the United States, Van Buren was called upon to deal with a business depression more serious than any which had preceded it in the history of the United States. In those days of extreme individualism, it is not surprising that recovery was left, in large measure, to the operation of natural economic forces. Van Buren states the case for such a policy persuasively, in more than one of his presidential messages. But this does not mean that he was an apostle of mere inertia. The panic of 1837 was, in no small degree, accentuated by Jackson's policy of placing government funds in favored state banks, where these funds became the basis for outrageous speculative activities. Van Buren saw this clearly; and seeing it, he urged tenaciously and, in the last event, successfully, upon Congress the passage of the so-called subtreasury bill, providing for the establishment of an independent repository for government funds.

Nor was this the only question on which the President showed a steady head, and took a large view. In the first year of his administration, insurrection broke forth in Canada. The excitement in New York State was intense, and so, too, was zeal for the cause of the revolutionists. Many New Yorkers, indeed, enlisted in the "patriot" cause; and Canadian forces, on the other hand, on one occasion crossed to the American side of the Niagara River, and there destroyed the vessel "Caroline," which had been engaged in carrying supplies to the patriots. In the midst of this commotion, the administration in Washington faithfully sought to pursue its neutral duties, and to enforce the neutrality laws. The ebullition of popular feeling did not swerve it from this course.

In still a third question Van Buren gave evidence of a wise caution. The republic of Texas, as we have seen, had won its independence of Mexico in 1836, and in 1837, at the very end of Jackson's administration, it had been recognized by the United States. In Van Buren's term of office, it applied for

annexation. This application Van Buren denied. Mexico had not yet given up hope of reacquiring its former province, and would be deeply irritated at American absorption of Texas. Still more important, rising antislavery sentiment in the North would be sure to resist the acquisition of more slave territory. The Texan question was therefore left to a later administration to solve.

On the slavery question itself, at this period, the President was, as he had been in the vice presidency, a conservative. He opened his term of office with a denunciation of the abolitionist agitation itself. In taking this stand, he was running counter to the trend of the times. The slavery question was dramatized in Congress in the late thirties by the extraordinary struggle of John Quincy Adams against the gag law, the rule of the House forbidding the reception of antislavery petitions; and the student of the politics of New York can easily trace in the speeches and attitude of leading politicians, such as William H. Seward, for example, the development of increasing antislavery sentiment in the Empire State. Indeed, as the decade of the thirties comes to an end, and that of the forties opens, the stage is being set for the great political struggle that leads on toward the Civil War.

#### THE SLAVERY QUESTION

Yet slavery can hardly be said to have played a part in the defeat of Van Buren in 1840. The depression which inaugurated his administration had even yet not run its course; in the South, the President had never really been popular, but had merely been accepted as the political heir of Andrew Jackson; and, in addition to these handicaps, the Whigs had succeeded in arousing great enthusiasm for the bucolic military man, William Henry Harrison, whom they nominated for President



without any inconvenient declaration of principles to hamper his campaign. Van Buren, then, joined the two Adamses as a one-term President, and his own state contributed to his defeat.

In the nomination and election of Harrison, New York Whig leaders had had a not insignificant part. The decade of the thirties had seen the rise of that remarkable political mechanic, Thurlow Weed, the editor of the *Albany Evening Journal*, and virtually the Whig boss of the state. Associated with him, the public figure gaining in popularity throughout the state, while Weed worked behind the scenes, was William H. Seward. Both had had a hand in the nomination of Harrison, preferring him to Clay. Judge H. L. White, of Tennessee, who abhorred Martin Van Buren "above all pretenders," was the first person to disclose the "Triangular Correspondence" by which "C—— residing in Rochester, S—— . . . in Utica, and T—— . . . in the city of New York" wrote to one another: "Do all you can for Mr. Clay in your district, for I am sorry to say he has no strength in this." Thus districts favorable to Clay were induced by friends of Webster to choose delegates to the national convention, opposed to Clay's nomination. Weed concealed his intention to force the nomination of General Harrison by selecting twenty delegates ostensibly committed to General Scott, but really favorable to Harrison. On the way to the convention, Weed completed an arrangement with New England leaders by which the supporters of Scott and Harrison combined to give the nomination to the latter. The nomination for Vice President was repeatedly offered to New York, but no candidate appeared. New York was recognized in the new cabinet by the selection of Francis Granger of Canandaigua, a courtly and agreeable personality, for the important office of postmaster-general.

But before long, disaster overtook the Whigs. Harrison died only a month after his inauguration, and John Tyler, the new

President, marched on to a breach with his party. Separating from it on domestic affairs, he also embarrassed it on questions of foreign policy, by bringing forward the question of Texan annexation and negotiating a treaty to that end, a treaty which was defeated in 1844.

The Texan question bore a principal part in the impending presidential campaign. In the skirmishes preceding the nominating convention, Van Buren, who seemed to be in the lead for the nomination, declared against immediate annexation; and although he hedged about this declaration with professions of willingness to heed the will of the people as expressed in a general election, he probably injured his chances by his attitude of caution. The Democratic convention turned to a dark horse in the person of James K. Polk, of Tennessee. The Whigs nominated Henry Clay. Clay had opposed the Texan treaty in the Senate, and it was believed that he would maintain this attitude. As the campaign developed, however, he began to equivocate, with a view to capturing the Southern vote, and this equivocation may well be considered to have been fatal.

In New York, antislavery sentiment had been steadily developing. A Liberty party, opposed to the further extension of slavery, had appeared in the campaign of 1840, nominating James G. Birney for the presidency; the language of politicians of the older parties more and more reflected the antislavery view, so important in central and western New York, and both New York's Senators had voted against Tyler's Texan treaty in the spring of 1844. Clay's wobbling attitude on Texas may very well have lost him the electoral vote of the Empire State, and with it the election of 1844. For Polk carried the state by a plurality of hardly 5,000 votes, and over 15,000 votes were cast for the candidate of the Liberty party, which again brought forward James G. Birney. Had those who voted the Liberty ticket, or even half of them, been willing to vote for Clay as

the opponent of Texan annexation, as has been observed in another chapter, the Kentuckian would have attained the presidency.

The administration which came into power in 1845 called a New Yorker, in the person of William L. Marcy, to the office of Secretary of War. That office was to prove particularly important in the Polk administration. For the strained relations with Mexico created by the annexation of Texas, and by the failure on the part of the Mexican government to settle American claims, coupled with Mexican unwillingness to treat with the United States, produced war in 1846. In the struggle which followed, Marcy exhibited real capacity, and, despite charges to the contrary, freedom from partisan prejudices. New York troops, too, played an honorable and gallant part in the famous march of General Scott from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico.

But despite these things, public sentiment in the state was by no means united in support of the war. In many quarters, it was regarded as raising new problems with regard to the extension of slavery. New York representatives in the House and Senate were, regardless of party, aligned in favor of the famous Wilmot Proviso, introduced in the congressional session of 1847 as an amendment to one of the appropriation bills and stipulating for the exclusion of slavery from all the territory acquired from Mexico. In the congressional elections of 1846, the Democrats, victorious two years before, lost heavily. One of the reasons for these losses lay in the factionalism which, as has been shown in another chapter, had now taken possession of the Democratic party.

In the presidential campaign of that year, indeed, New York was again destined to play a highly important rôle. The Whigs, agreeably to their traditions, nominated a military hero, Zachary Taylor, selecting as their candidate for the vice presidency a prominent New York Whig, Millard Fillmore; the Democrats

selected Lewis Cass, of Michigan, and Butler, of Kentucky. But the two old parties found a third and even a fourth group now in the field. A powerful and influential group of political leaders and men of affairs named Van Buren as the candidate of the Free Soil party; and a still more radical group of antislavery men, under the name of the Liberty League, nominated the well-known philanthropist and abolitionist, Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro. In the ensuing election, the vote of New York was badly split. The Whig strength, it is true, held firm; but the Democrats divided evenly, or almost evenly, between Cass and Van Buren, thus giving the electoral vote of the state to Taylor, and again, as in 1844, deciding the election.

In the stirring events of the days which followed, New York men had no small part. The new administration faced the difficult problem of organizing the territories taken from Mexico; and the question of what should be done produced one of the greatest political crises in the history of the Republic. Faced with the indignation of the South, and the antislavery feeling of the North, Whig leaders like Clay and Webster declared for compromise. An elaborate legislative program was brought forward, the purpose of which was to calm the agitation, and to take the slavery question out of the political arena. Should this program be accepted, or should the possibility of compromise be thrust aside? To the Senate of the United States, there had been elected from New York in 1849 a strong antislavery man, in the person of William H. Seward. Brilliant, often statesman-like, always a lover of popularity and applause, Seward was opposed to any concession to the South. And Seward was one who wielded great influence with the President, for he and Thurlow Weed had had an important part in Taylor's nomination. The soldier in the White House was preparing to insist upon the admission of California as a free state and the adjournment to a later date of the other issues raised by the compromisers, when

once more death stepped in to alter the course of a Whig administration. In July, 1850, President Taylor died, and Millard Fillmore became President of the United States. Fillmore had once been an antislavery radical; but he now cast his influence on the side of adjustment, and the result was the series of measures which are known as the Compromise of 1850. These measures have, of course, been variously judged. But it is perhaps the dominant view that they were the means by which the Union was consolidated for another decade, until the gathering strength of the North made secession both an inescapable challenge, and a certain way to the victory of the cause of the Union. In their realization, New York State, as we have seen, had its significant part.

#### SUMMARY OF NEW YORK'S RÔLE IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The year 1850 concludes the period which we have been examining in this chapter. A new epoch, that of increasing sectional strife and civil war, was about to begin. But it is not the prospective, but the retrospective, glance which we must now take. Looking back, what is to be said of the place of the Empire State in the history of the first sixty-one years under the Constitution?

In the formative years of the national government, the rôle of New York was almost preëminent. It gave to the nation the great financial genius, Alexander Hamilton, whose labors did so much to consolidate the new régime; and John Jay, who became the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Its Senators supported the fiscal program of the first Washington administration; the majority of its representatives did likewise. In the party struggles of the era, New Yorkers played an important part. Here again one discovers Hamilton, not always as wise in partisan maneuver as in statesmanship; one meets the fascinat-

ing, if sinister, figure of Aaron Burr; and one notes the important rôle of New York in the election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency of the United States. The country was governed for a season by an alliance of Virginia and New York. Then comes a period of influence less profound. The vice presidency, it is true, is much in the hands of New Yorkers: Aaron Burr, 1801-5; George Clinton, 1805-12; and Daniel D. Tompkins, 1817-25. On the Supreme Court bench sits Brockholst Livingston, 1806-23; and Smith Thompson, 1823-45. But the moving forces are not guided by New York men. New Yorkers like Peter B. Porter, it is true, play an honorable part in the events leading to the War of 1812; a New Yorker, not the most successful of his line but still a New Yorker, presides over the War Department during much of that struggle; and in the controversy over the admission of Missouri in 1820, no Senator gained a greater admiration than the venerable Rufus King. But the rôle of New York is far less significant than in the first decade. With the second quarter of the century, the scene again changes. New York plays a central part in the election of John Quincy Adams; it produces, in Martin Van Buren, one of the great political managers in the history of this country; through him, it has its part in the advent of Andrew Jackson to power; and the shrewd New Yorker who sponsored Old Hickory becomes Secretary of State, Vice President, and then President of the United States. It contributes P. B. Porter, Benjamin F. Butler, John C. Spencer, William L. Marcy, James K. Paulding, Francis Granger and Nathan K. Hall to the cabinet. In the legislative branch of the government, no veritable giants of debate or of counsel, except Silas Wright, make their appearance; yet New York is well served in Congress, and furnishes, in the main, support to the policies of the executive. In the rising struggle over slavery, moreover, its rôle is again a prominent one. On this issue, it contributes to the defeat of Clay in 1844; to the consoli-

dation of Northern sentiment, as expressed in the Wilmot Proviso, against the acquisition of further slave territory through the Mexican War; to the division and defeat of the Democratic party in 1848; and to the great events which culminated in the Compromise of 1850. And as the period closes, it sends to the Senate one of the most eminent of its public men in William H. Seward, as, only a few years earlier, it had given to the nation an effective and much underrated Secretary of War in William L. Marcy. In the whole story of its influence, there are two main lines of development which ought to be emphasized; at times the great commercial interests of the state seem to hold the stage, as in the fiscal program of Hamilton, as in the strong protectionist sentiment characteristic of the state, as in the hostility of the metropolis to Jackson; but measured against these interests are those of the agrarian democracy, usually triumphant, always powerful, sometimes crude, but often idealistic; sometimes ignorant, but often imbued with sound sense; and always typical of the time and of its spirit. In the rivalry of these interests, indeed, New York epitomizes a larger struggle, which is one of the major themes of the history of the United States itself.

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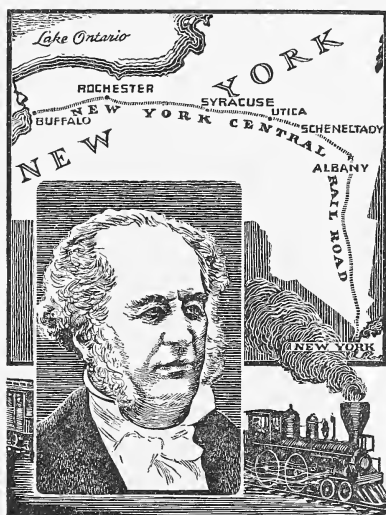
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# THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD

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## THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD

### THE FIRST VISION OF THE RAILROAD

IN 1826, the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad was incorporated, and the business of building and operating railroads across the state of New York was begun. Five years later, the first train in the state operated over the track of that first small road—from Albany to Schenectady—so that the railroad industry in New York is now over a hundred years old. Prior to its coming, the state already was in a fair stage of industrial development, owing to the evolution of its transport facilities. In the fifty years following the Revolution, real progress had been made in the opening of water transport routes, both across the state and up and down its more easterly counties. In addition to its rivers, lakes and canals, New York possessed a good system of highroads; some of them well-famed, such as the Albany Post Road, the Great Western Turnpike, the historic Ridge Road from Rochester to Niagara Falls, the North Country Road from Utica up to the Black River Valley and to Sacketts Harbor, the so-called Military Road (because originally it had been built by the United States Army as part of a scheme of national defense) from Sacketts Harbor through to Plattsburg, and many others.

These highroads admirably supplemented the natural waterways of the state. In the long months of northern winter, when waterways were more or less frozen and impotent, these served as the busy arteries of the commonwealth. Their handicaps were obvious. Paving was all but unknown, although the great road from Albany to Schenectady was equipped with long stone paving flags, placed in a double row, like a crude form of railroad track, so that teamsters and carters could haul their heavy loads up the steep grades with a little less effort on the part of

their horses. Since the highroads of the New York of that early day were—to put it lightly—inadequate for the demands of commerce, the state turned to waterways. It is enough to say here that the canal system paved the way for the coming of the railroad, even though oftentimes bitterly opposed to it.

The Grand Canal had hardly begun to handle its commerce and to give impetus to new towns upon its banks—Amsterdam, Utica, Rome, Syracuse, Rochester and Lockport being the chief among these—before the railroad clamor was heard in the land.

Railroads of a crude sort there had been, both in England and upon the Continent, for more than two hundred years past, but almost invariably these were connected with collieries as plant facilities—generally to bring coal from mines to the nearest dock upon navigable water. And so they were in the United States, at first. The small railroad with horse-drawn cars which Gridley Bryant opened, in 1826, at Quincy, Massachusetts, was a plant facility for bringing out great blocks of granite from the quarries, to scows three miles distant. Similar small railroads at Mauch Chunk and at Honesdale, Pennsylvania, were appendages of coal mines. On the last of these, there was to be run on August 8, 1829, the first practical steam locomotive ever operated in America—the “Stourbridge Lion,” British-built, which Horatio Allen had brought across the Atlantic to bring coal from the Delaware and Hudson Company’s mines in a distant mountain side to the terminal of its private canal at Honesdale.

Horses were the motive power of these very early railroads. In fact, even the far-visioned Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which the citizens of Baltimore were planning to build three hundred miles into the hinterland, in an attempt to recover some of the traffic for their seaport city that had been lost to it through the recent completion of the Erie Canal, was designed originally for operation by horses. These were not only to haul

its cars over the long level stretches, but they were to turn the capstans for endless cables by which these same cars were to be raised or lowered upon the inclined planes to be installed over the high hills.

### THE COMING OF THE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

But the steam locomotive was coming—with an irresistible sweep and power. In England, as early as 1814, Timothy Hackworth had made a practical adaption of Watt's steam engine to a road vehicle, capable not alone of propelling itself, but of hauling other vehicles behind it. Blenkinsop and others had developed this idea remarkably. But it was George Stephenson who created a highly successful transportation device. His "Locomotion No. 1," in September, 1825, hauled not only one car, but a whole long train of them. This Stephenson triumph was followed, four years later, by an even greater one. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway, of thirty-five miles, advertised a contest for steam locomotives. At this contest in the outskirts of Liverpool, Stephenson's "Rocket" emerged a rather easy victor and the most famous locomotive in the world. It was rapidly succeeded, however, by an increasing host of other practical locomotives, not only in Great Britain, but in France, Germany, other parts of Europe, and in the United States as well.

American manufacturing enterprise, although still in an incipient stage, was not to be denied this new field for its endeavors. Indeed, as early as 1825, John Stevens, upon the grounds of his estate at Hoboken, New Jersey, had laid down a small circular track and was running upon it a tiny steam locomotive, which functioned perfectly. Four years later, Peter Cooper, an alderman and distinguished citizen of New York City, was endeavoring with a similar crude and homemade device, the "Tom Thumb," to convince the skeptical directors of

the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad that a steam locomotive was the only solution for their motive-power problem. His success induced those directors, two years later, also to hold a locomotive contest near Baltimore, similar to that at Rainhill, near Liverpool, from which they chose their first *practical* locomotive, the "York," which had been hauled to the seaport city for sixty miles, over the rolling Maryland hills, by teams of oxen. The result of that test was that the Baltimore and Ohio never used British-built locomotives.

Yet for the next twenty years or so, England was to send a very considerable locomotive fleet of her manufacture to this side of the Atlantic. The pioneer "Stourbridge Lion," as we already have seen, made its successful *début* up in the Pennsylvania hills at Honesdale. But the first locomotive to be used in New York State—the "De Witt Clinton," which made the now historic trip over the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad from Albany to Schenectady, in August, 1831—was built within this state, at the West Point Foundry, situated at the foot of Beach Street, in the city of New York. This factory, an affiliate and outgrowth of an early iron foundry at Cold Spring, just across the Hudson from West Point, had already constructed two highly practical locomotives. The first of these was the "Best Friend of Charleston," built on order from the South Carolina Canal and Rail Road Company and shipped from New York to Charleston by water in October, 1830. After a few trial trips, this small locomotive went into regular service. Unfortunately it was doomed to a short life, for six months later it burst its boiler and was practically destroyed. The safety-valve device already had come into being; but the "Best Friend's" engineer had been annoyed by the sound of escaping steam, and had tied it shut, with the result that the locomotive was ruined and three men rather seriously injured.



## THE MOHAWK AND HUDSON

Despite the fact that its charter permitted the use of horse power, the Mohawk and Hudson, even before its completion, also ordered an English locomotive. This was not the "De Witt Clinton," but the "John Bull," built by the Stephensons at their factory at Newcastle upon Tyne. It reached New York late in August, 1831, and was at once sent up the river to Albany. But in the meantime the "De Witt Clinton" had been completed and was already in active service. Although apparently a somewhat inferior locomotive in practical results, it aided the Mohawk and Hudson in making a rather spectacular bow to the public.

What was this Mohawk and Hudson company and how had it come into existence? The story may be told in a few paragraphs. In order to find the easiest possible gradients for the Erie Canal up the steep ascent from the Hudson at Albany to the Mohawk, it had been found necessary to take an extremely roundabout course between Albany and Schenectady—distant from each other but sixteen miles in a direct line. It was obvious that to stretch a railroad tangent across this bow would be a great shortening of the western trip for passengers, but not for freight, which could hardly afford the cost of double transfer at the two ends of such a road.

No one thought at the outset that the railroad would be foolhardy enough to attempt directly to parallel adequate waterways, such as the Hudson, Long Island Sound, Lake Champlain or the Erie Canal and its branches. But where a railroad, running over high plateaus, could shorten these waterways, it was an admitted facility—even in 1826. And so it came to pass that the first road to be planned and built in western New York was for a similar purpose, to shorten the distance between

Rochester and Buffalo—also a roundabout and tedious trip by the canal. The second in that territory—the railroad from Syracuse to Rochester, by way of Auburn and Canandaigua—was careful to avoid paralleling the waterway, even though it took a route a full twenty miles longer than that of the canal. And the first railroad planned between the highly important cities of New York and Albany—the New York and Harlem—took very good care to avoid directly paralleling the Hudson and so offending the powerful steamboat interests that were the veritable kings of that stream.

George W. Featherstonhaugh, of Duanesburg, in Schenectady County, at an early day had sensed the possibility of a short-cut rail line between Albany and its neighboring Dutch town of Schenectady. He brought to his aid that powerful old patroon, Stephen Van Rensselaer. But the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, as it soon came to be named, was essentially the product of Featherstonhaugh's enterprise and vision. He was a man of parts, and is credited with having organized the State Board of Agriculture. For several years prior to 1825, Featherstonhaugh, the possessor of a large library, had been a student of railroads. He began to plan how this new form of land transport could best be adapted to American needs; to the needs of the very community in which he lived and worked. His interest in the new idea eventually was to lead him, in the fall of 1826, to England, there to see this strange new device, the steam locomotive.

Prior to his voyage overseas, Featherstonhaugh apparently had contemplated only horse power for the proposed railroad between Schenectady and Albany. He had estimated, in 1825, that the new railroad, double-tracked and built largely of a wooden superstructure with thin "strap" iron rails, laid upon wooden sills, would cost \$9,258 a mile to put down, or \$148,128 for the entire distance of 16 miles. On this track, there would

operate 300 "waggon," at a cost of \$60 each, and hauled by a total of 60 horses, in turn costing \$70 each. Interest on all this investment of right of way and running equipment, plus wages of officers and employees, Featherstonhaugh had put down at the modest figure of \$23,000 a year. He carefully figured out the carrying capacity of his "waggon" and the revenue that should come to them (based on the earning capacity of the Erie Canal between the two cities), and arrived at the conclusion that the new road should earn from this freight traffic alone (passengers apparently did not come into his reckonings at this time) \$73,000 annually. The promoter of the Mohawk and Hudson did not lack the optimism that those who were to follow him were frequently to show—so strikingly and so pathetically.

But optimism probably was what the Mohawk and Hudson most needed at just that particular moment. It must have been optimism that brought the hard-headed Stephen Van Rensselaer into the picture; with him the astute John Jacob Astor, Nicholas Fish, James Duane, Peter A. Jay and some other representative New Yorkers. It must have been optimism that had inserted in the Schenectady *Cabinet* on December 28, 1825, a notice that an application would be made to the legislature of New York for an act "to incorporate the Mohawk & Hudson Rail Road Company, with an exclusive grant for a term of years, for the construction of a Rail Road betwixt the Mohawk and Hudson rivers, with a capital of three hundred thousand dollars, to be increased to five hundred thousand dollars, if necessary; and to receive such certain tolls on the same, as may seem fit for the legislature to grant." It may have been optimism that led the legislature of the state to grant the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad its charter, on April 17, 1826, even though the cautious Van Rensselaer had just written Featherstonhaugh:

I have brought an old House about my ears by signing the petition. I have written I will withdraw my name if necessary, the Albanians think the city will be ruined and the trade diverted to my land below the overslaugh. You must help me out of the difficulty.

The legislature, under great pressure, and after long labors by Featherstonhaugh, finally had passed the incorporation bill. There was no general law in New York authorizing the incorporation of railroad companies, and a special act was necessary. This one stated that by this act "Stephen Van Rensselaer and George William Featherstonhaugh with such other persons as shall associate with them for that purpose, be and are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate by the name of the Mohawk and Hudson Rail Road Company for the purpose of constructing a single or double rail road or way betwixt the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers."

Upon its incorporation, Van Rensselaer became the first president of the Mohawk and Hudson. Yet his interest in the project seems never to have been strong. From holding 80 shares at the time of its inception, he gradually dropped down to an ownership of but 24 shares. Featherstonhaugh became vice president of the company. Yet even he was not long to remain identified with it. Within a brief time, he was visited by a succession of personal catastrophes—the death of his two daughters, followed by that of his wife, and then by the destruction by fire of his lovely home near Duaneburg. These disasters, coming in quick succession, had the effect of driving him out of the state of New York. In November, 1829, he resigned all connection with the Mohawk and Hudson and tendered his holdings of 601 shares of its stock to the company, all of which was accepted. He retired to a new residence in Philadelphia and his important connection with the first railroad enterprise in the state was all but forgotten.

Without him, the Mohawk and Hudson company, beset by

many difficulties, strove for a new leadership. It was to come, but slowly, in the person of a remarkable early American railroad engineer, John B. Jervis. Jervis, a native of Huntington, Long Island, was the man who had helped design the Erie, and the Delaware and Hudson Canals, and who had become chief engineer of the latter. For many years, he was to be prominently connected with the construction of many of the component parts of the present New York Central Railroad; in the last year of his life, he was to be elected president of the Rock Island; and he was to die, on January 12, 1885, in Rome, New York, for many years his home city, one of its most honored residents.

Jervis took hold of the nascent Mohawk and Hudson enterprise, with force and with vigor. He imbued it with his own enthusiasm, gave it the leadership that it so very much needed. Under his direction, the route was surveyed and definitely located, and actual construction upon the road began in the summer of 1830. Its original promoters, almost to a man residents of New York city – the citizens of Albany and Schenectady took but little interest or part in the project – while accepting the steam locomotive, did not have faith that it would be able to climb the steep hills at Albany and at Schenectady. Therefore the first accepted route for the road contemplated, at both of these towns, inclined planes, up which the trains would be hauled by cables attached to stationary engines, and a level stretch of line across the plateau connecting them. The highest point of the road was 335 feet above the level of the Hudson and 105 feet above the Mohawk. The level stretch upon the plateau would be fourteen miles long. The road was compelled by its charter to begin at the edge of the Hudson, at Albany, and to enter into the very heart of Schenectady. All of this was carried through, but upon a location considerably different from that of the main line of the present-day New York Central between those two cities.

The construction of this early railroad, which was begun at Schenectady, was of a heavy type; in the words of that day, "permanent." The foundation of the tracks was of heavy granite blocks, about sixteen inches in each dimension and set three feet apart. These blocks were quarried both at Sing Sing, on the Hudson, and at a point on the Mohawk about twelve miles distant from Schenectady, and were brought to that city by water. Upon them was laid the stout wooden superstructure of the track, which was finished by the strap rails of wrought iron, which were imported from England. The entire roadbed was, indeed, "permanent"—perhaps too much so. For experience was quickly to prove that the stone foundation was entirely too rigid for the comfort of passengers and the long life of the rolling stock, and when, a year or two later, Mr. Jervis began the construction of the neighboring Saratoga and Schenectady Railroad, he discarded the use of stone blocks entirely and began laying the track more as it is laid at the present time.

#### THE "DE WITT CLINTON"

Actual operation of the Mohawk and Hudson began in the late summer of 1831. At the outset, and for a number of years thereafter, horses were used to some extent for motive power, particularly on the extension of the line down through State Street, Albany, past the Capitol and to the Hudson's edge, in compliance with the company's charter. But the iron horse came into this picture coincidentally with the one of flesh and blood. The "De Witt Clinton," having safely arrived by boat from New York, made several trips during August and September, hauling three to five heavily-loaded cars, each weighing about eight tons, from Albany to Schenectady and back, at times reaching a speed of 30 miles an hour. William H. Brown, a well-known silhouette artist of that day, who made one of

these trips (and later fashioned a fascinating and authentic picture of the train) has handed down the most generally accepted description of it, though he is probably wrong as to the date and other details:

On this first excursion, on the 9th day of August, 1831, as no such officer as a conductor had been required upon the road, where hitherto no connected train of cars had been run. . . . Mr. John T. Clark, as the first passenger railroad conductor in the North, stepping from platform to platform outside the cars, collected the tickets, which had been sold at hotels and other places through the city. When he finished his tour, he mounted upon the tender attached to the engine, and, sitting upon the little buggy-seat, as represented in our sketch, he gave the signal with a tin horn and the train started on its way. But how shall we describe that start, my readers? It was not that quiet, imperceptible motion which characterizes the first impulsive movements of the passenger engines of the present day. Not so. There came a sudden jerk, that bounded the sitters from their places, to the great detriment of their high-top fashionable beavers, from the close proximity to the roofs of the cars. The first jerk being over, the engine proceeded on its route with considerable velocity for those times, when compared with stage-coaches, until it arrived at a water-station, when it suddenly brought up with jerk No. 2, to the further amusement of some of the excursionists. Mr. Clark retained his elevated seat, thanking his stars for its close proximity to the tall smokepipe of the machine, in allowing the smoke and sparks to pass over his head.

At this water-station stop, a practical device was resorted to, to prevent a recurrence of these unpleasant jerks. The cars were stretched as far apart as possible and wooden rails, from a near-by fence, inserted between them to hold them taut. Let Mr. Brown resume:

In a short time the engine (after frightening the horses attached to all sorts of vehicles filled with the people from the surrounding country, or congregated all along at every available position near the road,

to get a view of the singular-looking machine and its long [*sic*] train of cars; after causing thus innumerable capsize and smash-ups of the vehicles and the tumbling of the spectators in every direction to the right and left) arrived at the head of the inclined plane at Schenectady, amid the cheers and welcomes of thousands, assembled to witness the arrival of the iron horse and its living freight.

After some time passed in the ancient city of Schenectady, and ample refreshments had been afforded, the word was given by conductor Clark to prepare for the return. The excursionists resumed their seats and in due time, without any accident or delay, the train arrived at the point from which it had first started, the head of the inclined plane at Albany.

The records show that the "Clinton" made at least one more exhibition trip that year, but how much further use of the engine was made in 1831 is not known. It must have been that it did not work properly, because it was found necessary to equip it with new wheels and eccentrics. But that second exhibition trip in September, 1831, deserves a paragraph or two of attention. It was enjoyed by a group of high state officers, including the governor, the lieutenant governor, the members of the state senate, the mayor of Albany, and various other men of importance. A contemporary account of it, from the *Albany Argus*, September 26, 1831 reads:

Owing to a defect in one of the supply pipes of the English locomotive [the *John Bull* brought over by Jervis from the other side of the Atlantic] that powerful and effective engine was not brought into the line, and the party, having been delayed in consequence, did not leave the head of Lydius Street until nearly 12 o'clock. They then started with a train of ten cars, three drawn by the American locomotive, the *De Witt Clinton* and seven by a single horse each. The appearance of this fine cavalcade, if it may be so called, was highly imposing. The trip was performed by the locomotive in 46 minutes and by the cars drawn by horses in about an hour and a quarter.



The practical effect of this second public trip to Schenectady—much more successful in every way than its predecessor—was to make a good point for the nascent New York and Harlem, which at that very time was endeavoring to gain a right of way for itself through Fourth Avenue, New York City. The solons of the metropolis at the mouth of the Hudson, having ridden for the first time behind the iron horse, became convinced at once of its feasibility and practicability from almost every point of view, and so withdrew their opposition to the operation of a new-born railroad over a thoroughfare street.

The "John Bull" (erroneously referred to by the *Argus* in its account of the excursion of September 24, as the "Brother Jonathan") was built, it will be recalled, by the famous locomotive works of Robert Stephenson and Company, at Newcastle upon Tyne. It arrived at Albany soon after the first trip of the "De Witt Clinton." These two locomotives were followed, in quick succession, by three others—the "Experiment" (soon after, called the "Brother Jonathan"), the "Mohawk" and the "Hudson." With four practical engines, the "De Witt Clinton" soon being deemed impractical, horses were retired as motive power upon the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad. The first coaches, made by placing old-fashioned stagecoach bodies upon flanged-wheeled running frames that were capable of being coupled together, were also found to be highly inefficient; and these were replaced quickly by new *railroad* coaches, which were described by the Schenectady *Whig* as being

of a square form, fifteen feet long, with the separate compartments, and will contain eighteen persons with ease. We consider them a great improvement upon the kind heretofore used—as passengers, at the same time they have more room, will be protected from the smoke and coals of the engine. One of these carriages bears the name of our new sister city, Utica—a compliment which the citizens of that place will

undoubtedly return by a frequent resort to its soft cushions, and panelled walls, and thus find themselves in "Utica," though a hundred miles from home.

### THE SARATOGA AND SCHENECTADY RAILROAD

For sixteen more years, or until 1847, the Mohawk and Hudson continued to operate and to thrive under its original name and incorporation. In 1832, it established connection, at Schenectady, with the early Saratoga and Schenectady, which led directly northward twenty-five miles, to the great spa just then coming into the first flush of its tremendous national success as a fashionable watering place. The trains of the Mohawk and Hudson made direct connections in the same depot at Schenectady with those of the Saratoga road, and time was allowed for substantial meals while the baggage and the mails were transferred. That was not a day when traveling folk thought hurry necessary.

The Saratoga and Schenectady had its corporate existence even before the "De Witt Clinton" led that first momentous trip across the Albany plateau. On January 8, 1831, a petition had come into the Assembly, begging leave to incorporate the new road; eleven days later, a bill had been reported to consummate the incorporation; and on February 16 it became statute law.

By this act of incorporation, the Saratoga and Schenectady Company was authorized to carry goods and persons "by the power and force of steam, of animals or any other mechanical power." In fact, horses were first employed on the line, when it was opened for business, on July 12, 1832. At that time, the road, which also had been built under the immediate direction of John B. Jervis, and the general supervision of C. C. Cambreleng, the first president of the company, was not quite

finished over the valley of the Kayaderosseras at Ballston Spa, a deep gulch which the railroad to this day continues to span by means of a long high embankment built upon a horseshoe curve. For the better part of a year, passengers were transferred around this gap in coaches. What was done with the freight is not stated.

The passenger traffic of this little road thrived from the very beginning. Yet even before that, one finds the *American Railroad Journal*, of June 16, 1832, quoting the *Ballston Spa Gazette*, to the effect that the company's stock has just risen 17 per cent and "it has already been demonstrated that income will be 35 per cent net yearly." A few weeks later, that same *Journal* contained a schedule showing the arrangements for through passenger travel between Albany and Saratoga for the summer of 1832. It took four and a half hours to make the trip in either direction. The road, according to the *Diary* of that indefatigable traveler, Philip Hone, was "traveled by horse power."

Yet, assuredly, this could not be for long. The success of the locomotives of the Mohawk and Hudson, despite all their limitations and obvious faults, was not lost upon the promoters of the Saratoga and Schenectady and, of course, not upon Mr. Jervis. In the small shop of the Mohawk and Hudson, at Albany, he caused to be set up the first locomotive for the Saratoga road, the "Davy Crockett," which also had been built by the Stephenson Works in England. It had a bogie or "lead" truck, to enable it better to travel the sharp curves of the new road.

This new locomotive went into active service upon the Saratoga and Schenectady in the spring of 1833, at about the same time that the long embankment at Ballston Spa finally was completed and track laid over it. But even then the locomotive could not penetrate into Schenectady itself. To bridge the Mohawk was out of the question for the little railroad. So its first

rails were laid through the long spans of the old covered bridge between that city and Scotia, on the north side of the river. Five years later when the Utica and Schenectady had been completed, the Saratoga road arranged to run its trains, and, of course, its locomotives, across the Mohawk bridge of that road into the heart of the busy town. At a still later time (1870), the Saratoga road built its own Mohawk bridge, a mile or more down the river from the others.

The completion of the railroad into the famous Springs spelled quick success for them, as well as for the pathway that led up to them from the south.

In summer the road was crowded with pleasure seekers en route to and from Saratoga Springs and with others intent upon satisfying idle curiosity. In Winter, to travel by horse and cutter from one end of the route to the other was an exhilarating experience. The people of Schenectady and Saratoga Springs for over a year after the road was built were so intent upon these excitements that almost no freight was carried over the line. . . . Although the close of the year 1833 was a time of slow and uncertain business in the large financial centers, the Spring and Summer of 1833 were buoyant seasons for Saratoga Springs. In April 1240 visitors traveled over the road, which, according to a Saratoga newspaper, was more than four times the usual volume of travel between Saratoga Springs and the South in the early Spring.

The railroad to Schenectady was not long to be left as the sole rail egress to the south from the Springs. The citizens of Troy, always jealous of the pride and prestige of their town, felt that they, too, must be in this new railroad picture, and accordingly, with much *éclat*, they finished, in 1835, their Rensselaer and Saratoga Railroad into Ballston Spa and a connection with the older road, with such success that before that year was finished it was absorbing the pioneer. And so was the seemingly unending process of consolidating railroads within the state of New York begun.

## THE NEW YORK AND HARLEM

The third railroad to come into existence within the state was the New York and Harlem, a much more pretentious enterprise than either of the two others. It was chartered in the summer of 1831, and very early in the spring of the following year it began the construction of its line, at the corner of Prince and Center Streets, in what was then the very heart of the business activity of New York City. The immediate destination of this new road was well indicated by its name; its promoters, however, held far higher hopes for it. In the back of their heads, Albany was the ultimate goal. But in the thirties and forties, the fear of the powerful steamboat interests upon the Hudson held them back from proclaiming their purpose too loudly. Yet upon the occasion of turning the first shovelful of earth for the construction of the new road, on February 24, 1832, John Mason, the vice president of the new company, predicted that the railroad would be "Connected . . . shortly with a much greater work, embracing in its general outline, the interests and convenience of at least one-half the population of this great state and the like interest and accommodation of our sister states, Connecticut and Massachusetts." There were many in the assemblage who caught the full drift of his meaning.

In that early day, the growth of the young metropolis was being fairly throttled by its own difficult contours. A long, narrow island, bounded on all sides by broad rivers, very expensive and most difficult to bridge, it presented its own sizeable problems. New York had but one way to grow—north. But that created great embarrassments. It meant, in that single direction, a city of immensely long distances. And the only remedy for such long distances was good and swift transportation. The Harlem road was to bring New York the first real solution.

By the end of November, 1832, the first of its jingling little horse cars, one named the "John Mason" after the vice president and moving force of the company and boasting of three compartments each seating ten persons, in addition to seats on the roof behind the driver, were in regular service between Prince Street and Union Square. A little later, the line was extended south to the City Hall and north to Twenty-third Street. There for a time it halted. North of Twenty-third Street, the hard and rocky island of Manhattan offered many difficulties for the early railroad builders. In those days, its contour was most uneven. There had to be much cutting through rock, a slow process with the gunpowder blasting then used. To dip down into the Harlem plain, a tunnel became necessary—from Ninety-second Street to Ninety-fourth. It was one of the first railroad tunnels in the United States, and New Yorkers drove up in their carriages just to look at it. The *Evening Post* wrote:

The tunnel through which the line passes is the most costly portion as well as the most attractive feature of the road. Among the thousands who are daily conveyed through it, a vast majority is impelled by a desire to examine the "tunnel" which, though excavated at immense cost, contributes in no small degree to increase the revenues of the company.

So slow was all this construction work, and so costly, that it was not until the fall of 1837 that the railroad actually reached Harlem. It was at once greeted with such a flow of traffic that a second track was needed, and was immediately added. The road pushed its rails up to the brink of the Harlem River, and finally crossed that stream at 135th Street on Gouverneur Morris' ancient toll bridge, which a little later it was to buy. In the latter part of 1840, its trains were running to Fordham; two years later, to Williamsbridge; and, after another two years, to White Plains. Here it paused for a short time. Albany now

became the announced goal of the New York and Harlem. The state legislature authorized its extension north from Westchester County, through the counties of Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia and Rensselaer, to a point on the Hudson opposite Albany or, at the option of the railroad company, to a junction with any other railroad leading to a similar point, meaning, of course, the Boston and Albany, which had been built in 1840-41.

Work went ahead once more upon the road. It reached Croton Falls on June 1, 1847; Dover Plains, December 31, 1848; and on January 10, 1852, it was completed through to Chatham and the rail connection was made on to Greenbush, opposite Albany. Yet, after all this energy, the Harlem actually was beaten into Greenbush by a few short months; the successful competitor was the Hudson River Railroad from New York City, along a more direct route, of which more in due course.

Horses did not long remain the principal motive power of the Harlem road, although they did continue for many years on its tracks in down-town New York. They brought its cars, singly, up to the chief passenger terminal of the road, on the west side of Fourth Avenue, between Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Streets. Here they were grouped into trains which were hauled north by the steam locomotives. Later, this locomotive terminal was moved up to Forty-second Street, the site of the present Grand Central Terminal. The railroad to New Haven was completed in 1848, and it acquired running rights over the Harlem, in and out of New York, from a junction point just north of Williamsbridge. The suburban, or commuter, passenger business over both of these roads was born.

## THE TONAWANDA RAILROAD

To find the next early railroad, one must go from the extreme easterly edge of the state toward its western border. The Tonawanda Railroad Company (spelled "Tonnewanta" in those early days) was incorporated on April 24, 1832. It proposed to build, safely away from the Erie Canal, from Rochester to Attica and, a little later, to Black Rock or Buffalo. The capital stock, which was sold very largely in the city of Rochester, was fixed at \$500,000, and a group of men, very largely Rochesterians, were made directors, with David E. Evans as president; Jonathan Child, vice president; Frederick Whittlesey, secretary; and David Scott, superintendent. Work upon the new railroad was immediately begun and three locomotives, built by the Baldwin works in Philadelphia, were shipped to Rochester by canal and there placed upon the rails of the new road. There was not then, or for a number of years thereafter, rail connection between it and the group of early roads at the east end of the state.

The level country traversed by the Tonawanda road lent itself easily to quick and inexpensive railroad construction, and it reached Batavia, 34 miles distant from Rochester, in May, 1837. It had cost, with its single track, its three locomotives and its fleet of passenger and freight cars, about \$10,000 a mile, a most reasonable figure, even for those days. No wonder that the completion of its first link was made the occasion of considerable public celebration. A contemporary account in the Rochester *Daily Democrat* of May 12, 1837, says:

The morning was delightful and at the hour designated for the departure of the cars, they were thronged with our citizens desirous of participating in an event so important to the interests of our city.

When we reached the Depot the engine was snorting like an impatient war horse; and at a given signal, it sped forward "like a thing



of life." Hearty cheers from the multitude scattered along the line of road greeted its magic progress, and gave a thrilling animation to the scene.

Upon its arrival at Batavia, the first train was greeted by cannon, and its passengers celebrated by an elaborate midday dinner at the Eagle Hotel. In due time, the party returned to Rochester, and the road settled down to regular business. Five years later, it was continued on eleven miles to Attica, where it made connection with the new Attica and Buffalo Railroad. This latter was a Buffalo enterprise, which, although incorporated in 1836, did not begin construction until 1840 or 1841, for in the meantime panic had come upon the country. Overbuilding of railroads, which had led to a flood of these enterprises, oftentimes poorly planned, financed and built, had brought on one of the first serious financial crises that the United States had ever known, and, in turn, this caused a sharp cessation of railroad building. After the country had regained its equilibrium, the laying down of railroads began again, but in a moderated and more conservative form.

Then it was that the chain of railroads all the way across the state of New York, from Albany, close to the head of navigation upon the Hudson, to Buffalo, at the foot of navigation upon the four upper Great Lakes, began with zest and earnest. Between the Tonawanda Railroad in the west and the Utica and Schenectady and the Mohawk and Hudson roads in the east, there was now to be forged a chain of great iron links.

#### FORGING THE RAILROAD CHAIN ACROSS THE STATE

The fear with which the early railroad builders viewed the political strength of the waterways across the state—chiefly the Hudson River and the Erie Canal—has been shown already. But, as the earliest railroads gained strength and popularity, this

fear waned. The railroads also acquired financial strength. Success begets success. And soon these first roads, no longer weak and trembling, became powerful and, to a degree at least, wealthy.

Then it was that the "railroad idea," spreading like wildfire across the nation, began to take a substantial form within its chief state. After all, there were severe limitations upon the uses of the inland waterways. For one thing they were, at the best, very slow carriers, and for another, the dead hand of winter annually made them ice-filled and useless for at least four months out of each year. Then, too, people were beginning to like to ride on the cars—in increasing numbers and with an increasing liking—and so began to ask why they could not go farther upon them, and alongside rivers or canals, frozen or open, and at their own pleasure and with greater convenience.

The answer to all of which was the inevitable paralleling of the waterways by the railroad. In fact, the Mohawk and Hudson was hardly in full operation before an extension west to Utica, seventy-eight miles, was being projected, under the name of the Utica and Schenectady. This company was incorporated on April 29, 1833, and elaborate provisions were made by the state legislature in its charter to protect the traffic of the Erie Canal.

Owing to its paralleling the Erie Canal [says F. W. Stevens, in his *Beginnings of the New York Central*], the charter peremptorily declared "no property of any description except the ordinary baggage of passengers shall be transported or carried on said road." Owing to assumed injury to the business of the Mohawk Turnpike Company, owning a turnpike road paralleling along the Mohawk River, the charter also provided the railroad company should pay \$22.50 per share for the stock of the turnpike company before commencing the transportation of passengers.

A number of years were to elapse before the Utica and Schenectady Railroad was finally to be released from this hand,

gripping at its throat. In the meantime, the road had been constructed and opened through to Utica, by August 1, 1836; and, under the energy and ability of its first superintendent, William C. Young, an outstanding man, had so prospered that a second, or double, track was almost immediately necessary.

At Utica, there soon was connection with a railroad on to Syracuse, by way of Rome, fifty-three miles more. This was the Syracuse and Utica Railroad, incorporated on May 11, 1836, quickly and easily financed (the railroad fever was in the very air in those days), and opened to traffic on July 3, 1839. As usual upon such occasions, a special party of dignitaries journeyed from one village to the other. The *American Railway Journal* of August, 1839, tells of the formal opening of this road:

The Utica and Syracuse Railroad has been pushed vigorously forward. It has been constructed by the stockholders, without either the aid of the State or a resort to loans. . . . It is worthy of remark that this Road has been completed within the time fixed and has cost less than the sum estimated. . . . Syracuse, already a large, enterprising, enlightened village, is destined to become a great inland city. It possesses in its soil and its mines the potentiality for acquiring wealth "beyond the dreams of avarice." . . . Syracuse is now within nine hours (150 miles) of Albany, and within 19 hours (300 miles) of New York. The rapidity with which we pass between two places is amazing. We left Albany at half-past two P.M. on Tuesday, went to Utica in the afternoon, where we remained until five o'clock next morning. Was at Syracuse at half-past eight o'clock yesterday morning, remained until four o'clock and was at home this morning, breakfasting on a salmon taken from Lake Ontario night before last, having travelled 300 miles, passing a night at Utica, nearly a whole day at Syracuse and being absent only 42 hours.

The next step in the westward progress of the iron horse across the state of New York was, obviously, from Syracuse to Rochester. Here the route of the Erie Canal was avoided, delib-

erately. The iron trail bent well to the south, taking in a group of fine villages—Auburn, Geneva and Canandaigua chief among them—which had grown up in highway days and which had been avoided by the new canal, to their temporary annoyance. By this roundabout course, the railroad added a full twenty miles to the distance between Syracuse and Rochester and took two separate companies to make the link, but it was felt that this was very much for the best. The Auburn and Syracuse Railroad Company was incorporated and, after some bitter struggles against financial obstacles, construction was begun in the hard summer of 1837 and carried on through the still harder winter that followed. There apparently is no record of a formal opening of the road, but it probably was sometime in the summer of 1839.

This road [said the *American Rail Road Journal* of September 5, 1835] in addition to being part of the line of the great thoroughfare will have the advantage not only of carrying goods and produce as part of the great western trade but also of the local transportation from Auburn and its vicinity and intermediate country to the canal at Syracuse. The amount of the business is almost incalculable. It embraces the merchandise and country produce of the inexhaustible stone quarries and lime at Auburn; the raw materials and manufactures at the State Prison which employ constantly 700 hands; the trade through Owasco Lake from Homer and its surrounding country; the trade from Skaneateles, Camillus, Marcellus, &c., and also the great manufacturing power of the village. To these sources of revenue which must make it one of the most profitable railroads in the state, may be added the great travel which the business between the two places must necessarily create.

Its continuation as the Auburn and Rochester, incorporated on May 13, 1836, had less difficulties in its construction. It was built eastward from Rochester, where a station site had been located on the west side of the town, just at the great falls of

the Genesee, and was finally completed through to Auburn on November 4, 1841. When this had been done—and the Attica and Buffalo also completed, on November 24, 1842—there was a through railroad, such as it was, from Albany to Buffalo. But, with eight separate railroad companies involved, there was anything but through service. The Auburn and Rochester might have been one of the final links in this chain, but seemingly it was not quite the best, at least according to the *Canandaigua Republican* of May, 1847, which, however, defends the company:

This road having been made the special object of attack by the *Buffalo Express* it has been promptly vindicated by the Rochester papers. The *Express* had charged that it was the worst managed road on the line and the mail failures west were mainly attributable to it. The *Rochester Democrat* furnishes a table of the time of departure and arrivals of trains between Auburn and that place for 9 days from which it appears that the train has started from Auburn but once at the regular hour and then it arrived at Rochester on time. . . . The trains from Rochester to this place run with such precision that some of our citizens set their clocks by it and so far from being a badly managed road we doubt if there is a better one in the country.

But even under the most favorable conditions, in the early forties, the through traveler had a hard time of it. With all the trains on time—and they rarely were—it took twenty-five hours to go from Albany to Buffalo, and there were at least three changes of cars: at Utica, at Syracuse, and at Rochester. And the Rochester change, for a long time, was complicated by the fact that the depots of the Auburn and Tonawanda roads were half a mile apart and one must take a bus or a hack to go from the one to the other. When the two roads finally consolidated these station facilities, to the great relief of all through travelers, it was against the bitterest opposition on the part of the Rochester hackmen.

Out of all this rather chaotic condition, there was now to be evolved rather swiftly a through single railroad from Albany to Buffalo. It actually was preceded by the coming of through train service. In November, 1842, the Syracuse and Utica made overtures to the other roads across the state for such a service. This was followed two months later by a "railroad convention" of most of the companies at Syracuse, and by one at Albany in which all of these companies were represented. Two through daily trains, making the run between Albany and Troy and Buffalo in twenty-five hours were arranged for, with a standard rate of fare of 3 cents a mile. A little later, a third train was added at 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  cents "for one description of cars" and 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents a mile for riding in the emigrant cars. Eventually, a crude form of sleeping cars was to be added, which continued to and after 1853, when the first New York Central Railroad was incorporated. Dining cars were not to come until a much later day. The dining rooms in the station houses in the chief points along the line were used by travelers, and some of these had more than a local reputation for the excellence of their fare.

#### THE FIRST NEW YORK CENTRAL—THE HUDSON RIVER ROAD

It was in 1853 that the first New York Central, as differentiated from the present one which was not organized until 1914, was incorporated with Erastus Corning, of Albany, as its first president. Mr. Corning had been a director of the Utica and Schenectady, which had absorbed the early Mohawk and Hudson, since its inception, and had been its only president. An Albany merchant of great wealth, prestige and no small political power, he was felt to lend great distinction to the new-born, consolidated company.

That company had, at the outset, in addition to the lines already described, several branches: from Rochester to Lock-

Tow Boat

19

River,

8

Rail Road,

8

Canal,

8

to Cts. of

8

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Baggage from New York to	100
from New York to Buffalo	100
from Buffalo to New York	100
from Buffalo to New York	100

# RAIL ROAD LINE FROM NEW YORK TO BUFFALO.



The Bears,

has paid me

Dollars for the postage of

Presents from New York to

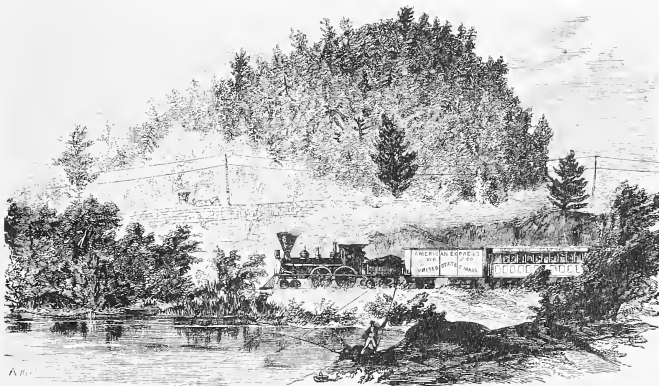
One hundred pounds of baggage free for each full passenger on the  
River, and fifty pounds on the Rail Road and Canal.

TOW BOAT

NEW YORK,

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To JOHN M. HUGHES, Esq.  
Schenectady.



TRANSPORTATION IN NEW YORK





port and Niagara Falls; from Buffalo to Lockport; from Troy to Schenectady; and, in many ways the most important of all, the so-called Direct Road between Syracuse and Rochester, which had been finished in 1852, and which, following the line of the Erie Canal, cut twenty miles off the distance between the two cities.

Here at last was a definite and well-planned railroad system. With connections at both Albany and Troy with railroads from New York and Boston, as well as with the Hudson River boats (except in winter), it met, at Buffalo, a rapidly expanding railroad along the south shore of Lake Erie, already reaching Cleveland, Toledo, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis and other points; it met, at Suspension Bridge, over the fine structure which the genius of John A. Roebling had just completed over the gorge of Niagara, the ambitious new Great Western Railway, which led to Detroit, with connections there with the Michigan Central and other lines. The New York Central, already a well-traveled route, had now become a most strategic one. It was enabled to do battle with the Erie, the Pennsylvania, and the Baltimore and Ohio roads, now well established to the south, for competitive traffic; as well as with the Grand Trunk Railway, just being completed through Canada, well to the north. No wonder that the Central became, from the outset, a very prosperous property. As such, it invited the interest of Cornelius Vanderbilt, a prominent steamboat operator who lived in New York City.

Commodore Vanderbilt, as he was almost universally called, had at first scorned the railroads as business enterprises, but in the latter years of his life had become tremendously interested in them. In the early sixties, he had come into the struggling New York and Harlem and had acquired control of it. But the road that he really wanted was the newer and better Hudson River Railroad, completed in 1851 from New York up the east

bank of the Hudson, through Poughkeepsie to Greenbush, opposite Albany. Here *was* a railroad.

It had been built at greater cost than any other road in the United States up to that time, and with great care to make a direct through route between the chief city of the state and its capital. John B. Jervis had been the first of the engineers to plan the line, and he regarded it as the greatest monument to his abilities. W. J. Young was brought from the Utica and Schenectady to supplant Mr. Jervis, when the latter's health had begun to fail under the strain of building the new road and with the weight of increasing years.

The Hudson River Railroad had had its inception in a mass meeting of the citizens of Poughkeepsie, in the late fall of 1845. Three years before, there had been talk of such a road and an engineer of local reputation, R. P. Morgan, had been engaged to make preliminary surveys. He planned to put the road inland; parallel to the river of course, but a considerable distance from it. Gradually this plan was abandoned. The fact that the new railroad, by following the edge of the river, could establish a practically gradeless route from New York to Albany weighed heavily.

And so it was that when Jervis went to work with his surveys, he followed this latter plan. While his men toiled in the open, the promoters of the new company labored indoors, chiefly at New York and at Albany. They fought successfully the hostile steamboat interests, as well as those of the Harlem road and of the conservative landowners on the river brink; and on March 1, 1847, they complied with their charter conditions, showed subscriptions of three millions of dollars, and incorporated themselves with William Chamberlain as president and Jervis as chief engineer.

The plans for the construction of the new road went ahead with a rush. By July, 1847, contracts were being placed for

the first fifty-three miles of the line, all the way from Thirty-second Street, New York City, to Breakneck Hill; and in the following September men, horses and wagons were being moved upon the actual scene of construction. The flinty nose of that same Breakneck Hill, sticking right out into the Hudson, was a source of much trouble, but was finally pierced by a tunnel, through which the road was pushed forward so that, on the very last day of 1849, regular train service was begun between New York and Poughkeepsie. The upper half of the line was put through with similar vigor, and, on the first day of October, was completed through to Greenbush, and a little later, to Troy. Mr. Young became president of the road, and it became a competitor for the traffic between the two chief cities of the state.

Yet the facilities for reaching Albany were much impaired, in those days, by the necessity for alighting from the cars at Greenbush and there crossing the river. In summer time, this was done in a comparatively easy fashion by ferryboat, but in the winter, when the river became choked with ice and recourse must be had to sleighs, the crossing was not always pleasant. But it so continued until 1866, when the first railroad bridge over the Hudson at that point was completed and opened to traffic.

#### ENTER COMMODORE VANDERBILT

Once he had made up his mind that he wished to get into the railroad business, this already wealthy Commodore Vanderbilt did not stop until his great enterprise and vision had created what was practically a single railroad system which did not really end at Buffalo, but reached, by two different routes, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis, while his interest and control in outstanding roads west of Chicago were both strong and dominant. By shrewd maneuvering, Vanderbilt gradu-

ally had managed to gain control of the Hudson River road. That road, magnificently planned and extravagantly built, had been, for the first few years of its operation, run at a heavy loss. Young, like Jervis, went down under the burden of ill health and the strain imposed upon him. He was succeeded as president by the outstanding figure of Edwin D. Morgan, then prominent in state politics and afterward to become war governor of New York and Senator at Washington. Morgan brought the road much distinction, but he was far from being a railroad genius. It took a born railroad man, in the person of one Samuel Sloan, who was to leave a great impress upon the railroads of the state, and who finally became president of the Hudson River, to put it upon a paying basis.

The New York Central was a much harder problem for Commodore Vanderbilt than ever the Harlem or the Hudson River had been. The commanding figure of Erastus Corning loomed like a Gibraltar against the plans and progress of the New Yorker. The Central had extremely irritating practices, from the Commodore's point of view, at least. In the winter time, when the Hudson River was filled with ice and closed to navigation, it would give its freight, in huge quantities, to his railroad. But when spring came and the river was opened, the New York Central used to show a shrewd favoritism for the various boats from Albany southward. The Commodore knew that the only way to stop this practice would be to buy and control the New York Central.

This was easier said than done. When, in 1864, Erastus Corning went down under the increasing infirmity of advancing years, he was at once succeeded as president of that road by another man of even greater wit and power, Dean Richmond, of Batavia. Now it was that fate intervened in favor of the Commodore. At a political convention in Philadelphia two years later, Dean Richmond was stricken by illness and died a few days later in the house of his friend, Samuel J. Tilden, in

Gramercy Park, New York. His sudden going left the "New York Central crowd," at its headquarters at Albany, all but panic-stricken. Vanderbilt watched his opportunities and played all his cards well. In a few months, he had control of the Central; on December 11, 1867, he was elected president of that road, and began at once his plans to consolidate it with the roads that he already controlled to the south and to the east.

This last step was accomplished, as far as the Hudson River road was concerned, on November 1, 1869, when the New York Central and Hudson River was given its official birth. The Harlem did not come into the consolidated company until four years afterward. This done, the Commodore set out at once to make his a real railroad property. He had already completed a huge new freight terminal on the lower west side of Manhattan Island, then and now known as St. Johns Park, and he determined to build in East Forty-second Street the largest and handsomest passenger station, not only in America, but in all the world. This was the Grand Central Depot, the first of three outstanding stations that have occupied the site. When it was first opened on October 9, 1871, America sat up and rubbed its eyes in astonishment at this architectural achievement.

Yet these were hardly more than beginnings of the new Vanderbilt policy. The Commodore next announced that he proposed to build four main-line tracks all the way from Albany to Rochester (a little later, to Buffalo) — an almost unheard-of thing for those days. The Albany bridge, so long promised, already had been built, and had been gayly acclaimed by all — except perhaps the citizens of Troy, who already had a good railroad and highway bridge over the Hudson, and who rather welcomed traffic delays at Albany. The first Albany bridge, on the site of the present north bridge of the two railroad structures over the river, was finished and opened to the public on February 22, 1866. After this, train passengers from New York or Boston no longer had to use ferryboats or sleighs to get across

the Hudson into Albany. A new railroad station was built, adjacent to the famous Delavan House, and the New York and Boston trains backed in and out of the station until 1872, when the second, or south, bridge was built at Albany, permitting a through movement of passenger trains.

The Central of those days was a rather simple and old-fashioned road, albeit one handling a vast amount of traffic at all seasons of the year. Its actual operations were conducted by its three great superintendents—John M. Toucey, at New York; Zenas Priest, at Albany and Utica; and George H. Burrows, at Rochester. Each man possessed, though different from his two fellows, many of the qualities of a general. Yet each in his way was simple enough. For years, two of them lived in the station houses along the line: Major Priest in the upper floor of the depot at Little Falls, and Burrows in similar quarters in the old stone station at Niagara Falls. Yet they managed to keep the traffic moving, and Cornelius Vanderbilt looked upon them with high approval as he sought new worlds to conquer.

These new worlds were never to be conquered. The Commodore was coming to be an old man. Yet he kept actively in the saddle up to that day in January, 1877, when he died in his home off Washington Square, New York, at the advanced age of eighty-three years. He was immediately succeeded by his son, William H. Vanderbilt, in whose abilities he put great trust. The younger Vanderbilt also continued as president of New York Central up to the day of his sudden death in the spring of 1885. Thereafter the actual control of New York Central by the Vanderbilt family ceased, although its influence in the road, even up to this day, is no inconsiderable factor.

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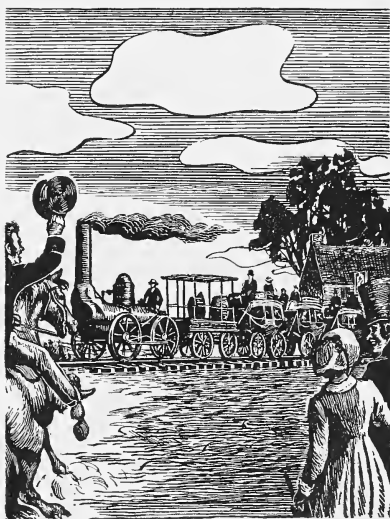
The bibliographies for Chapters V and VI have been combined and follow Chapter VI.

— VI —

THE RAILWAY SYSTEMS OF  
NEW YORK

EDWARD HUNGERFORD

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the Rome, Watertown and  
Ogdensburgh Railroad, etc.  
Watertown, New York*







## THE RAILWAY SYSTEMS OF NEW YORK

### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ERIE

THE chief route of transportation across the state was, and still is, through the valleys of the Hudson and of the Mohawk, and then parallel to the southern rim of Lake Ontario to Buffalo, thence along the south bank of Lake Erie to the extreme westerly boundary of the state. Nature made this route for man. Yet the folk of the extreme northern and southern counties have always felt, rightly, that they should not be neglected in this matter of transport facilities. This has been particularly true in regard to the southern tier of counties most closely adjoining the Pennsylvania line. Consider the real apprehension with which the southern tier of counties regarded the swift development of the central belt across the state—favored first by crude forms of river and lake transport, then by highways, then by the trunk Erie Canal, and finally by the coming of the railroad. Nature, most generous to that central belt, had not been equally so to the southern tier, but had interposed high ranges of steep hills, practically mountains, and between these, deep valleys. Man, to build an artificial highway over and across these, would have to use his ingenuity.

Yet that very ingenuity is forever the habit of man. The little towns in that southern tier—Binghamton and Elmira chief among them, the pioneers of the Delaware, the Susquehanna and the Cohocton Valleys—may have lacked political power, but they were ambitious. They found an unexpected ally in the rich and powerful Eleazar Lord, of New York City, who had been interested as far back as 1826 in a plan to build a state highway, or even a canal, across the southern tier from the Hudson to Lake Erie, saving many miles over the Mohawk Valley route,

but at what cost, no man might then dare to estimate. To turn this early dream into the more practical reality of a railroad was the endeavor of William C. Redfield, of New York, who in 1829 brought out a pamphlet entitled, *A Sketch of the Geographical Route of a Great Railway, by Which It Is Proposed to Connect the Canals and Navigable Waters of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, and the Adjacent States and Territories, Opening Thereby a Free Communication at All Seasons of the Year between the Atlantic States and the Great Valleys of the Mississippi*. The route that Redfield proposed was from the bank of the Hudson

in the vicinity of the city of New York, at a point accessible at all seasons to steam ferryboats and from thence proceeds through a favorable and productive country to the valley of the Delaware River near the northwest corner of the County of Sullivan. From thence the route ascends along the Delaware to a point that affords the nearest and most favorable crossing to the valley of the Susquehanna, which it enters at or near the great bend of that river.

Redfield's route then followed the valleys of the Susquehanna and the Tioga, intersecting the terminations of the Ithaca and Owego Railroad, and the Chenango and Chemung Canals, the upper Genesee River, the outlet of Lake Chautauqua, to the Pennsylvania state line.

Here was, in large measure, the route of the present Erie Railroad, which, after a number of preliminary meetings at Monticello, Angelica, Jamestown, Owego and elsewhere, came into legal existence on May 9, 1832, at a meeting held in New York City, at which Philip Church presided and Redfield was secretary. Much enthusiasm was shown. But the legislature, passing the act that authorized the New York and Erie Company on April 24, 1832, had stipulated that the capital stock of the company should be \$10,000,000, and that \$500,000 should be

actually paid in before the company could be organized. This proved to be a thing far easier said than done. It was hard to raise the money to make even a preliminary survey of the proposed road. The War Department, having received the approval of President Andrew Jackson, volunteered Col. De Witt Clinton, the nephew and namesake of the late governor, for the task, without cost to the Erie promoters. Later this tender was withdrawn and the survey abandoned for a time.

It was not until a group of Erie enthusiasts had paid \$9,880 out of their own pockets to the Federal government, as the actual cost of making the survey, that Clinton and his men started their work. The New York and Erie elected Eleazar Lord as its first president, subscriptions began to come in very slowly, and the enterprise was launched. It was a long time, however, in making any real headway. At the time of this original survey, there was not a town on the whole route whose population exceeded three thousand. But Lord and his associates persisted, the surveys were pushed steadily ahead, and ground was actually broken at sunrise on the morning of November 7, 1835, at a point on the bank of the Delaware near Deposit. The monument which marks this important step in the railroad progress of the state of New York was unveiled, with ceremonies, at that precise point, seventy years later, to the day. James G. King, who had succeeded Lord as president of the railroad company, turned the first earth, and said:

What now appears a beautiful meadow will in a few years present a far different aspect—a track of rails with cars passing and repassing, loaded with merchandise and the products of the country. The freight will amount to \$200,000 per annum in a very few years.

According to Edward Harold Mott, in his *Between the Ocean and the Lakes; the Story of Erie* (New York, 1901), the latter declaration “being received with great incredulity by those

present, the speaker concluded his prediction with the modifying expression—'at least, eventually.'"

King did not live to see the road even completed to its first announced western terminus, at Dunkirk, on Lake Erie. This was not to come to pass until the spring of 1851, when on May 14 a special train, filled with distinguished guests and friends of the management, started on its way from Piermont-on-Hudson to Dunkirk, 460 miles distant. In this group were President Millard Fillmore and Daniel Webster, in addition to President Benjamin Loder, of the Erie, and Charles Minot its superintendent, who was to gain fame as the first man to send a train order by telegraph. This was in the early autumn of 1851. Up to that time it was railroad practice almost everywhere in the United States to let trains bound in opposite directions proceed against each other by the so-called "time interval system," under which the ruling train always had the right of one hour against the opposing train of the same class. When, under this crude plan, for any reasons, trains began to lose time, it was almost impossible for them to regain it. According to Mott, in his *Story of Erie*,

W. H. Stewart was running the west-bound express train on the day when Supt. Minot made his astounding innovation in railroading, he happening to be going over the road on that train. The train . . . was to wait for an east-bound express to pass it at Turner's. . . . That train had not arrived and the west-bound train would be unable to proceed until an hour had expired. . . . There was a telegraph office at Turner's and Supt. Minot telegraphed to the operator at Goshen . . . and asked him whether the east-bound train had left that station. The reply was that the train had not yet arrived at Goshen, showing that it was much behind its time.

Minot immediately took the situation in his own hands and wired the agent at Goshen to hold the east-bound train until further orders; he also gave a written order to the train on

which he was a passenger to proceed west without waiting for the lapsed hour. The train crew demurred. This was radicalism, with a vengeance. But they finally proceeded, and the business of train dispatching by telegraph in this country was formally begun.

To return to the opening of the road from Piermont through to Dunkirk, four days were taken for the trip. There was a vast amount of enthusiasm and entertainment shown. Webster seemed to be the outstanding figure. He made many speeches and, over at least a part of the way, he rode in a rocking-chair which had been fastened to the top of a flat car, in order better to survey the passing scene.

#### SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF THE ERIE

Yet, when all the tumult and the shouting of the inaugural were past, the officers of the Erie found themselves facing many serious problems. The country through which the road passed was far from developed, to put it very mildly. The author of Harper's *New York and Erie Rail Road Guide*, 1855, tells, in a paragraph, something of the wildness of the southern tier of that day:

The writer of this well remembers the strange scene presented along the line of the road on that memorable evening of the 27th of December, 1848, when was celebrated the opening as far as Binghamton. To him the country had long been familiar as hunting ground and it was a sort of sacrilege in his view to build a rail-road through the haunts of the deer. Old hunters that he had known stood at Deposit, in the snow storm, lit up by the tar-barrels, leaning on their rifles, and watching with curious eyes the apparition of the iron steed and his splendid train. Troops of girls entered at one end and walked through the whole row of cars, gazing with astonishment at the velvet seats and the cloaked citizens, who were no less astonished at the bright eyes and rosy cheeks that Delaware county could turn out in a winter storm

to welcome strangers. It was a new era in the southern part of the State and men said that it was folly to build an iron road through Sullivan, Delaware and Broome counties.

Another serious handicap that the New York and Erie faced was its lack of a proper terminus at New York. Owing to a provision of its first charter from the state of New York, by which it was compelled to lay its line entirely within the boundaries of that state, it had placed its eastern beginning at Tappan Slote or Piermont, just above the New Jersey boundary. It then had stretched itself across Rockland and Orange Counties, and down the sharp slope of the Shawangunk Mountains to the Delaware River at Port Jervis. Later it had been compelled, by topographical exigencies, to change this policy, crossing the river and running for a number of miles along the extreme northerly edge of Pennsylvania. Still farther to the west, at the great bend of the Susquehanna, for a few miles it again dipped into Pennsylvania. Within those few miles, it built what remains to this day one of the finest stone bridges in America, the Starrucca Viaduct; and, at the newly-created village of Susquehanna, it erected very large shops and roundhouses, placed there to escape the high taxes of New York State. Thereafter the road bent back into New York, and remained entirely within this state all the way to Dunkirk.

Gradually the New York terminal situation was remedied. The thirty-mile trip by steamboat from the wharves of New York City to Piermont was soon found to be a tedious and, in winter, a somewhat hazardous business. The Paterson and Hudson River Railroad was planned and built from Suffern, New York, through northern New Jersey to the waterside terminal of the United Railroads of New Jersey (now the Pennsylvania Railroad) in Jersey City.

For a time, the management of the Erie opposed this short cut into New York. It refused to issue through tickets, to pro-

vide baggage arrangements with it, or to make its trains connect with it at Suffern. It fell back upon provisions of that remarkable charter which forbade it to make connections with any other railroads whatsoever. Because of this early determination that the Erie should walk alone in the family of railroads, its track was laid at a different gauge—6 feet—from the standard gauge prevailing elsewhere throughout the state (4 feet, 8½ inches). This absurdity continued for a number of years. The line was not changed to standard gauge until some fifty years later, when the job was done in one day, not without a good deal of confusion.

Gradually common sense broke down the Erie's stubborn resistance and not only were connections made for Paterson, Passaic and Jersey City, but through trains were sent that way into the New York metropolitan district and through-train service by the Piermont route gradually abandoned, which occasioned no little protest from the folk living on the Erie between Piermont and Suffern. But all to no avail.

The bad judgment which had resulted in a poorly located terminus at the east end of the road was reflected in equally bad judgment at the west end. Trains had not been running in and out of Dunkirk for many months before the Erie management realized that it had made a mistake in not choosing the rapidly rising city of Buffalo as the western terminus of the road in New York State. That mistake, too, was soon rectified.

From the inception of the enterprise, the people of the Cohocton and the Genesee Valleys had hoped that the new road would go to Buffalo, instead of to Dunkirk, and go by their way. When they found that the main line would pass them by, they moved to build their own branch lines south to connect with it. Then it was that the Attica and Hornellsville Railroad was first organized, to connect at Attica with the extension of the Tonawanda Railroad, already mentioned, and so form a

through route with it into Buffalo. Upon its heels, on July 25, 1850, came the Buffalo and Cohocton Valley Railroad, afterwards the Buffalo, Corning and New York. The promoters of each road glared at the other in faint hopes that the opposition would desist. But all to no avail. Each road eventually was built; the one going from Painted Post, just west of Corning, up the Cohocton Valley to Bath and on to Avon, then a famous spa upon the Genesee, and so to Batavia and Attica; and the other, in a straighter path, from Hornellsville direct to Attica. The first of these roads made connections at Avon with the Genesee Valley Railroad, which it absorbed a little later, south to Mount Morris, and north to Rochester; and the second of them spanned the deep and exquisitely beautiful gorge of the Genesee at Portage, by a mammoth timber bridge which, when it was built, was looked upon almost as one of the seven wonders of the world.

This first Portage bridge, which was completed in 1852, rose, tier upon tier of timber, 234 feet above the level of the Genesee. The narrowness of the gorge is shown by the fact that the length of the structure was but 800 feet. It was so built that any timber could be removed from it without disturbing the rest of the structure. For twenty-three years this staunch bridge bore the weight of steadily increasing traffic. In the spring of 1875, it caught fire and was completely destroyed. It is a matter of record that it was then replaced, by a stout iron bridge, in just forty-seven days.

The line quickly became known, officially, as the Buffalo and New York City Railroad; it passed on through Warsaw to Attica, where it connected with the Erie route from Avon and used the original extension of the Tonawanda road on into Buffalo. The Central, in the meantime, had built its present direct route from Batavia to Buffalo, so an exchange of tracks was arranged.



But there was little friendliness between these two chief roads of the state. They fought for east-bound traffic at Buffalo, and fought bitterly. Rates were slashed, innuendoes exchanged, until the situation became so bad that a truce had to be patched up, which never lasted more than a few months. It was not until governmental regulation began to get a firm hand on things that this and other aggravated and continual "rate-wars" were abolished. Homer Ramsdell, of Newburgh, came to the presidency of the road, and gave it a conservative and constructive administration. He not only developed its Newburgh termini, but, by boring a notable tunnel under Jersey City, gave the Erie its own ample and valuable waterside terminus at that place.

From the beginning, Ramsdell had been hampered by the increasing financial difficulties of the road. Mortgage upon mortgage had been piled upon it to permit its completion to Dunkirk, and immediately after that President Benjamin Loder, a man tired and broken with his responsibilities, had been glad to retire from his office, and to let Ramsdell's broad shoulders take the burden. Ramsdell had four years of it—four years of great conflict and strife, not only with the New York Central for the valuable traffic east out of Buffalo, but with his own directors. He, too, was glad to retire, in the summer of 1857, in favor of Charles Moran, who demanded, and received, the unheard-of salary of \$25,000 a year.

The still increasing financial load of the property quickly led Moran into Wall Street for aid. He found it in the person of a shrewd money lender there, one Daniel Drew, who had been a cattle trader and a steamboat man, and who had had financial dealings already with railroads, notably the Harlem. Drew came into the Erie, Moran went out (1859), and Nathaniel Marsh came in as receiver and as president of the Erie Railway Company. This company came into existence in December,

1861, as the successor to the New York and Erie Railroad which, after thirty hard years of vicissitudes, had been forced into a receivership three years before. Nathaniel Marsh completed the Bergen tunnel, began to develop the tremendous present-day coal trade of the Erie, took over the branches into Buffalo and made them part of the main line of the road and, most important of all, prepared to amalgamate the new broad-gauge Atlantic and Great Western Railway, leading from Salamanca southwest through Meadville, Pennsylvania, to Akron, to Dayton and to the important railroad center of Cincinnati, where it enjoyed working connections over the broad-gauge Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, on to St. Louis. All of which having been accomplished, Nathaniel Marsh died in 1864 and chaos began in the offices of the newborn Erie Railway Company.

The student of railroad history who would go into the details of the Erie during the next dozen years, is recommended to that remarkable book by Charles Francis Adams, *A Chapter of Erie*. It is the story of constant battlings between Drew and Commodore Vanderbilt, James Fisk and Jay Gould. It is the story of midnight intrigues, of politics drawing a dirty hand across railroad finance, of printing presses running night and day to produce so-called "securities," of final court interference and of legal complications of every sort.

Vanderbilt, always a constructionist, was soon glad to get out of it all. He wanted the Erie for but one purpose—to ally it with the great railroad system that he steadily was upbuilding to the north and to the west of it. When the Commodore found that this was out of the question, he was glad to withdraw from the Erie, once and for all time. He preferred to beat it at its own game—getting the traffic through the service—and this he now prepared to do by four-tracking his own line, bridging the Hudson at Albany and giving it adequate rail terminals on Manhattan Island in the City of New York.

Out of the wreckage of those dark days of the sixties and the seventies, there gradually was to arise a new Erie. There was first to be a quick succession of presidents—Jay Gould, Gen. John A. Dix (another war-time governor of New York), Peter H. Watson, and Hugh J. Jewett—with varying records of success and achievement. Over the heads of all these men, there hovered a fearful and increasing financial menace. Twice again the ill-fated road was to undergo the strain of receiverships. The Erie Railway Company was to be succeeded, for seventeen years, by the New York, Lake Erie and Western; and it, in turn, on November 14, 1895, by the present Erie Railroad, which at the time of its organization took over the former New York, Lake Erie and Western property, the old Atlantic and Great Western—known latterly as the “Nypano,” the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio—the extension of this last road into Chicago, the Buffalo and Southwestern, and some lesser properties.

The Erie, up to but a few years before, had also served as a trunk line, particularly into the Buffalo gateway, for the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western from Great Bend and the Lehigh Valley Railroad from Waverly. It was fated to lose both these roads, as it had lost the Canandaigua Branch to the Pennsylvania. In 1882, the Lackawanna management, tired of bickerings with successive Erie administrations, decided to build its own line through Binghamton to Owego. It already owned the very early Ithaca and Owego Railroad, thirty-four miles long, and built in 1838 to cross a summit and connect the navigable waters of Cayuga Lake with those of the Susquehanna River. The new extension of the Lackawanna connected with this short railroad, then continued through Waverly and Elmira to Buffalo. It took the route of the Cohocton Valley northwest from Corning, and for many miles paralleled the old single-track line of the Erie through that valley, leaving it at Wayland

and moving directly across country through Dansville and Mount Morris to Buffalo.

This severe blow to Erie prestige and traffic was followed ten years later by the withdrawal of the Lehigh Valley. In the early nineties, it had growing pains and made the branch from Waverly (Sayre) north to Geneva, through Ithaca, its main line and extended it from Geneva through Batavia to Buffalo. A short branch linked it to Rochester; other branches to Auburn, to Cortland, Cazenovia, Camden, Naples, Hemlock Lake and Niagara Falls. This extension of the Lehigh was the last important piece of new railroad construction to be accomplished in the state of New York.

The Erie Railroad started with Eben B. Thomas as its first president. After establishing a good record as an operator, he was succeeded, in 1901, by Frederick D. Underwood, who remained as president for twenty-six years and became known as the most outstanding constructive figure in the whole history of that property. It was Underwood, aided by Daniel Willard, now president of Baltimore and Ohio, who almost rebuilt the Erie. He corrected the grades and eased the curves; he built new low-grade freight lines from Harriman to Port Jervis, and from Hornell to Cuba. He gave the road new and adequate rolling stock. In short, he accomplished a complete regeneration of the property. It cost much money, but provided efficiencies in railroad property that made the Erie, for the first time in its history, a profitable railroad. A few years ago, Mr. Underwood relinquished the active presidency, and was succeeded by J. J. Bernet, who was in turn followed by C. E. Denney, of the Van Sweringen interests, who had acquired control of the road as part of large consolidation plans covering much of the country east of the Mississippi.

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE DELAWARE AND HUDSON COMPANY

One chapter of Erie history remains to be told. To build a railroad from Albany southwest, to connect with the Erie, early became a logical thing. Such a road, the Albany and Susquehanna, was incorporated on April 19, 1851, and, after extraordinary delays, opened from Albany to Oneonta on August 28, 1865; four years later, after the completion of a rather costly tunnel, it was extended to a connection with the Erie at Binghamton. In the meantime, a branch of the Erie, known as the Jefferson Railroad, had been built south from that road at Susquehanna to Carbondale, Pennsylvania, in the anthracite districts. In 1871, the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company built a short-cut line passing under the Starrucca Viaduct to the Albany and Susquehanna, at the village of Nineveh. The Albany road was, unquestionably, a key line to the rapidly increasing anthracite traffic from Pennsylvania to northeastern New York and northern New England. As such, it was coveted both by Erie and the long-established Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, which handled a lively coal traffic itself. A good deal of stock of the new Albany and Susquehanna was owned by the towns along the line. Jay Gould, representing the Erie, tried to get hold of this. The "Albany interests," friendly to the Canal Company, made every effort to checkmate him. Judge Joseph H. Barnard, never unfriendly to the Gould and Fisk interests, threw the Albany and Susquehanna into a receivership. The "Albany interests" checkmated by having the straightforward Judge Rufus H. Peckham appoint Robert H. Pruyn of that city a receiver. Rival receivers, all endeavoring to exert their authority, led to great legal complications, which led, in turn, to what virtually amounted to civil war. Force was used, rails were torn up and bridges were burned. On August 11, 1869,

the Barnard receivers appealed to Governor Hoffman, who placed the road in the hands of the militia under Colonel Banks. From that time on, violence ceased, but it was months before the courts were cleared of the mass of ensuing litigation. When it all was over, the "Albany interests" and the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company were in control of the property.

In this way it became one of the foundation stones of the present Delaware and Hudson Railroad. The Delaware and Hudson Canal was completely abandoned in 1899, but its owning company continued its existence thereafter as a successful operator of railroads. It extended its lines south from Susquehanna to Carbondale, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, in Pennsylvania, and north from Albany to Plattsburg, Rouses Point and, by a connection, to Montreal. The foundations of this route north from Albany and Troy were formed by the Rensselaer and Saratoga Rail Road Company, with which were merged, on June 15, 1865, the Saratoga and Whitehall, and the Troy, Salem and Rutland roads, also established very early. This combined company was leased, in 1871, to the Delaware and Hudson Company, which immediately prepared to push it farther north. This was done in slow and difficult installments. In 1868, a road had been built from Rogers, on the Ausable River, to Plattsburg by the Whitehall and Plattsburg, which two years later built from Ticonderoga to Port Henry; in 1873, these roads and the old Montreal and Plattsburg were merged into the New York and Canada Railroad. A highly difficult terrain intervened between the sections. Efforts to overcome this difficulty and to join the lines were opposed by existing through roads in Vermont.

It finally took the efforts and leadership of Smith M. Weed, of Plattsburg, to complete the New York and Canada. Despite the severe physical obstacles attending the building of a railroad along the steep rocky shore of the west bank of Lake

Champlain, the road was opened from Whitehall to Port Henry in 1874, and to Plattsburg on November 29 of the following year. At Plattsburg, it made connection with the early Montreal and Plattsburg, built in 1852, and torn up and abandoned a few years ago, which led to Mooers Junction, upon the Ogdensburgh and Lake Champlain. The present direct route from Plattsburg through Rouses Point to the Canada line and Montreal was not opened until November 27, 1876.

To this main stem north were added the Glens Falls Railroad, from Fort Edward to Glens Falls, built in 1869 and extended through to Lake George in 1882; the Adirondack branch from Saratoga Springs to North Creek, a part of the ambitious Saratoga and Sacketts Harbor, which was started in the early fifties as one link of a through route from Boston, across the Adirondacks to Lake Ontario; and branches from Plattsburg to Ausable Forks, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, this last an extension of an early narrow-gauge road from Plattsburg to the lonely state prison at Dannemora, in the town of Bloomingdale.

The Delaware and Hudson built cut-off lines from Duanesburgh through Schenectady, over the former Saratoga and Schenectady to its main line at Mechanicville and at Ballston Spa. At Mechanicville, connection was to be made at a later time through Johnsonville with the Troy and Boston, afterward the Fitchburg, and today the Boston and Maine, through the Hoosac Tunnel to the port of Boston; and at Rutland, with the Rutland and Vermont Central railroads leading north through the entire length of the state of Vermont to Burlington, St. Albans and Montreal. The Hoosac Tunnel, one of the most ambitious railroad engineering enterprises, was, after many delays and no little loss of life, finished and opened to through traffic in 1876. It at once provided the shortest low grade route between Boston and the Hudson River. Owing partly to the fact that it intersected no large cities, it was never

able to compete very successfully with the Boston and Albany to the south of it.

Here was, and still is, decidedly a key road. In addition to its network of branches north of Albany, it acquired branch lines from the former Albany and Susquehanna to the beautiful village of Cooperstown, also to Sharon Springs and Cherry Valley. Its coal traffic, always large, continued to expand. In some cases it became necessary to put down a third main track to accommodate this heavy business, and its present president, Leonor F. Loree, sometimes speaks of one particular part of the road as the busiest stretch of double-track railroad in the entire land. What is, in some ways, a practical extension of this network of coal-carrying railroads is the Ulster and Delaware, running east from Oneonta, over the Catskills, to Kingston and Rondout on the Hudson, 108 miles away. This road was first known as the New York, Kingston and Syracuse, and was incorporated in 1875 as the Ulster and Delaware, with a branch line from Phoenicia to Hunters and the Hotel Kaaterskill. Recently, in accordance with the consolidation plans of the Interstate Commerce Commission, it has been merged with the New York Central and made a branch of the West Shore division of that railroad, which also has a branch, the one-time Wal-kill Valley Railroad, running southwest from Kingston to Montgomery.

#### NORTH-COUNTRY RAILROADING

The Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain, which the Delaware and Hudson eventually met and intersected, both at Rouses Point and at Mooers, was an outcome of an early effort to build a railroad nearly due west across the extreme northerly portion of the state of New York. This effort, which gained force as far back as the early thirties, finally was promoted chiefly in



the interest of the city of Boston, which dreamed of this northerly pathway to the inland commerce of the Great Lakes. Yet even before she had taken overt steps to accomplish that end, the people of the north were awake to the possibilities of such a railroad. It began to be discussed as early as 1829. Citizens of Montpelier, Vermont, met on February 17, 1830, to promote such a road, definitely, from Lake Champlain, where it would connect with the new Central Vermont road then building, across to Ogdensburg, just above the rapids of the Saint Lawrence and at the foot of navigation upon Lake Ontario, and by the Welland Canal to the upper Lakes. Of that meeting Franklin B. Hough wrote:

A committee previously appointed reported favorably on the plan and its advantages and estimated that passengers and heavy freight could be taken over the entire route [Boston to Ogdensburg] in thirty-five hours. They further predicted that fifteen miles an hour would hereafter be performed by locomotives.

The new project moved slowly. A railroad convention to discuss it was held at Malone, but it was not until May 21, 1836, that the Lake Champlain and Ogdensburgh Railroad was incorporated, with a capital of \$800,000. At that time, a direct road from Ogdensburg to Albany also was discussed. More delays ensued. The Lake Champlain and Ogdensburgh, like a good many other early roads, passed into obscurity, and from it emerged the Northern Railroad, incorporated May 14, 1845, with \$2,000,000 capital stock, this being organized in June, 1846, at Ogdensburg, with George Parish, an outstanding citizen of that town, as its first president. Contracts were let soon after, and in March, 1848, work began at both ends of the road and was pushed through so that it was finished and opened in October, 1850. It had cost to build \$5,022,121.31, which was a considerable sum of money for northern New York

in those days. It was a first-class road, with an elaborate passenger station and shops at Malone, all still standing, and extensive termini by the river side at Ogdensburg.

All the Northern road ever lacked was sufficient traffic to make it profitable. After certain difficulties with the Federal authorities at Washington, in regard to bridging Lake Champlain, so close to the international boundary and its military defenses, it was ready for through business. But little came. The road passed through many vicissitudes. It was repeatedly reorganized. It became the Ogdensburg Railroad, then the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain, then a branch of the Central Vermont, and finally what it is today, a branch of the Rutland Railroad.

It was in this roundabout way that the iron horse first entered the north country. The long gap between Ogdensburg and the main line of the New York Central was bound to be filled; in fact long before the first train passed over the Northern line, active steps were in progress to bring a road up from central New York to the north country. On April 17, 1832, the Watertown and Rome Railroad was incorporated, under an act which provided that its capital should be \$1,000,000, that the road should be begun within three years, and finished within five.

None of these things was done. In those days, the north country was indeed much of a wilderness. But it had ambition and it had persistence. So the act that authorized the Watertown and Rome road never was permitted to expire. A few enthusiasts kept the railroad project very much alive. William Dewey made a survey on horseback of the proposed road, from Rome to Watertown, passing through Pulaski. Soon afterward, he issued copies of a small pamphlet, enthusiastically urging the completion of the road. It did not fall upon entirely deaf ears. The folk of the brisk little Saint Lawrence River port of Cape

Vincent felt that the Watertown road should be extended to their entrepôt, and promptly organized a little road, with \$50,000 capital, to achieve that end. Their enterprise was absorbed a little later in the larger one, which was not permitted to die. Many meetings were held in favor of it. One of the most important was described in this fashion in the *Northern State Journal* of Watertown, on March 29, 1848:

Seldom has any meeting been held in this county [Jefferson] where more unanimity and enthusiastic devotion to a great public object have been displayed, than was evidenced in the character and conduct of the assemblage that filled the Court House. . . . *Go ahead*, and that *immediately*, was the ruling motto in the speeches and resolutions and the whole meeting sympathized in the sentiment. And indeed, it is time to go *ahead*. It is now about sixteen years since a charter was first obtained and yet the first blow is not struck. . . .

We trust that none but efficient men, firm friends of the Railroad, will be put in the Direction. The Stockholders should look to this and vote for no man that they do not know to be warmly in favor of an active prosecution of the work to an early completion. . . . With a Board of Directors such as can be found, the autumn of 1849 should be signalized by the opening of the entire road from the Cape to Rome.

These words had their effect. At any rate, on the following April 6, the Watertown and Rome Railroad was formally organized, at the old American Hotel in Watertown, with Orville Hungerford as its first president and a rather distinguished roster of Watertown citizens as other officers and directors. Resurveys of the road had been made, omitting Pulaski, to the great distress of the residents of that village, contracts were let for the building of the road, and locomotives and cars ordered. No time was lost. Construction, which began by the side of the Utica and Syracuse track at Rome, was pushed forward and the iron horse first entered the smart village of

Watertown on an October evening in 1851. The following year, the road was extended to Cape Vincent. Before that, however, Mr. Hungerford died and was succeeded as president by another outstanding citizen of northern New York, William C. Pierrepont, of Brooklyn and of Pierrepont Manor. It was he who carefully watched the development of the road through its first years of steady growth.

For from the beginning, the Watertown and Rome prospered greatly. Another group of north-country citizens, headed by Edwin Dodge, of Gouverneur, as president, incorporated themselves in January, 1852, as the Potsdam and Watertown Railroad, and from it built a connecting link north to the Northern Railroad, at a point just beyond the village of Potsdam, now known as Norwood. From De Kalb, on this last road, a branch was also built to Ogdensburg, and the entire road was opened in 1857. Four years later, it was merged with the older road as the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg, which for the next thirty years continued a career of widely varying success. It built a line from Richland west through Pulaski to Oswego, and purchased the Syracuse Northern, finished in 1871, extending from Syracuse to Pulaski and to Sandy Creek. If it had stopped its progress then and there, it would have been well. The road was earning and paying its 10-per-cent dividends, and was one of the most prosperous in the state, if not in the land.

But the Watertown group sought new fields to conquer. In those early days of the seventies, another group, largely residents of Oswego, was occupying itself in extending a road due west from that town, then at the height of its prosperity as a lake port, along the southern rim of Lake Ontario to Suspension Bridge and the connecting roads west from that point. This, from the outset, was an ill-advised scheme. Ten miles or so south of the lake ran the main line and branches of the New York Central, and there was not enough traffic to support a railroad

in the narrow strip between. But the promoters of the Lake Ontario Shore Railroad went ahead blithely.

And what a line we shall have, [they argued.] Seventy-three out of our seventy-six miles west of the Genesee River as straight as the proverbial ruler-edge; and a maximum gradient of but twenty-six feet to the mile! What opportunities for fast—and efficient—operation.

And what a line they did have! Nearly enough to wreck the Watertown road, when it attempted to absorb it and extend it through to "the Bridge" and Niagara Falls. The men who had operated the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburgh successfully for years past went down to defeat. Samuel Sloan, a Vanderbilt protégé, came over from Oswego and assumed the presidency of the road. Under his leadership, it made very little headway. Sloan's first love was his Lackawanna Railroad, and one of his first steps was to put anthracite grates in the locomotives of the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburgh so as to make traffic for his own road. The stock of the Watertown road sank to great depths. Just how far it would have gone will never be known, for in 1883 an astonishing change came to the property.

A shrewd Yankee trader, one Charles Parsons, came up to Watertown of a spring day, produced votes and proxies at the annual meeting of the road, and emerged as its president and guiding force. Samuel Sloan at once dropped out of the picture. Parsons was a constructive force. With the aid of another New Englander, Henry M. Britton, whom he engaged as his general manager at Oswego, he began the process of upbuilding the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburgh. He extended it into Massena, where there was a connection with the Grand Trunk to Montreal, and into the very heart of the prosperous city of Rochester. And, as a final stroke, he acquired his only rival in the north country, the Utica and Black River, always a well-run and successful railroad. The Utica and Black River was the

outgrowth of a determined attempt to build a railroad north from either Rome or Utica to and through the Black River Valley. Utica finally won the distinction of being its southern terminus, but for many years the road, which was begun in 1855, reached only as far as Boonville, the summit of the old Black River Canal. In the seventies, it was extended to Carthage, Watertown and Sacketts Harbor on the one hand, and to Clayton, Morristown and Ogdensburg upon the other.

This done, Parsons had a railroad to be reckoned with, with some six hundred miles of main line, which ran through a productive and largely noncompetitive territory. Days of prosperity quickly returned to it. He sought other fields to conquer. By building a comparatively short stretch of line east from Utica to Mechanicville, and another, far shorter, one from Utica to Rome, he would possess a route all the way across the state of New York that might easily prove to be a serious competitor of the powerful New York Central. Already the Central was not only threatened with serious rivalry of this sort, but was beginning to receive it. A railroad, first known as the New York, West Shore and Buffalo, was being built, at no little cost, up the west bank of the Hudson from Weehawken, opposite the city of New York, to a point a few miles south of Albany, which was reached by a branch; from here it turned abruptly west, to proceed through the valley of the Mohawk and in a line, closely paralleling the Central, all the way to Utica, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo.

William H. Vanderbilt, in 1884, in the last year of his life, was still in active control of New York Central, when the West Shore finally was opened all the way from New York (Weehawken) through to Buffalo. An epoch-making rate war, both freight and passenger, ensued; but it was short-lived. The West Shore itself was short-lived. It lacked the financial resources for a fight of that kind. It was in the hands of receivers before

it had even finished its line into Buffalo. It was glad to capitulate in 1885 to the Central, which then purchased it and made it a secondary or relief line for its heavy traffic all the way across the state.

With the West Shore out of the way, the Central turned its attention to its vexing new competitor to the north. It made active threats to build its own line up to Watertown, a suggestion that was received with great acclaim by the north country. It already was preparing to strike a line across the heart of the Adirondacks to Malone and thence to Montreal. This Adirondack railroad was the pet child of Dr. W. Seward Webb, a son-in-law of William H. Vanderbilt, who acquired the small Herkimer, Newport and Poland, a narrow-gauge line extending north seventeen miles from Herkimer. He changed its gauge to standard, and prepared to thrust it to the north. This was completed in 1892, and the operation of through trains was begun between New York, Utica and Montreal. The railroad which John Hurd had built between 1882 and 1889, from Moira south to Tupper Lake, also was acquired and it was extended, over a bridge across the Saint Lawrence at Cornwall, through to Ottawa.

The projected New York Central branch to Watertown was never built. On March 14, 1891, it was announced that the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburgh had passed into the hands of the Central, which by this stroke had added 643 route miles of line to its already-existing 1,420 route miles. Parsons had achieved a rare coup. Only Watertown was disappointed. And it gradually was appeased, by the return of the general offices of its railroad to it, and by the improved service which the larger road was able to give. For a number of years thereafter, the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburgh continued to be operated practically as a separate railroad.

## OTHER NEW YORK STATE RAILROADS

Here then were the chief factors in the railroad development of this state. There were others relatively lesser, yet not lacking in importance. Some of these were tragic, such as the Oswego Midland, an enterprise of the late sixties and the early seventies, which endeavored to thrust an extremely tenuous and difficult link of single-track railroad all the way from Jersey City across northern New Jersey, through Middletown, Liberty, Sidney, Norwich and Oneida, to the lake port of Oswego. It also had branches to Rome and to Utica, and at Earlville it connected with the Chenango Valley, now a part of the West Shore division of the Central, for Syracuse.

This road was a nearly impossible project. From the beginning, it was doomed. It was used as a medium by promoters to secure subscriptions from towns and from private citizens. Its inevitable failure was a calamity. Yet from all the wreckage, a capable railroad—the New York, Ontario and Western—was developed. The line from Middletown to Jersey City was lopped off, becoming the New York, Susquehanna and Western, with its tracks almost entirely outside of New York State, and a connection and ownership agreement was made with the new West Shore, by which the tracks of that line were used from Weehawken to Cornwall-on-Hudson, whence a new, direct, double-track line was built across the country to Middletown. A valuable coal branch was sent down into the Scranton fields from Hancock, and branch connections made into Port Jervis, Monticello and Kingston. With a rail connection over the first Poughkeepsie bridge from Campbell Hall into New England, the Ontario and Western gradually became an efficient and fairly profitable railroad.

From Rochester there also was built, in the seventies, a railroad toward the southwest, also destined to become efficient and



profitable. This was the Rochester and State Line, which for many years was content to extend from Rochester through Leroy, first reached in September, 1874, and Warsaw to Salamanca, where it enjoyed excellent connections with the Erie. This road was extended, in August, 1883, when the oil boom first came to western Pennsylvania, to and through Bradford to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. At that same time, it was extended to Buffalo and the name of the company changed to the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh. It retained this name for many years, although it was not until 1899 that Pittsburgh was reached over the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio from Butler.

One of the most interesting developments of this small but prosperous railroad was the establishment, in 1907, of a car ferry from Charlotte, now the port of Rochester, across Lake Ontario, fifty-eight miles, to Coburg, Ontario, on the north shore. The Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh, having established itself primarily as a heavy carrier of soft coal, found this ferry of great help in the development of an export market in Canada for its bituminous coal. For a quarter of a century, this car ferry, with its two huge ships, has been in steady operation, summer and winter. Lake Ontario is subject to many heavy ice floes in winter, but there are few days when the great white ships, which are especially designed to meet this condition, do not succeed in making their way from the one side of the lake to the other. On the last day of December, 1931, the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh lost its separate identity, as an operating railroad at least. On that day, the Baltimore and Ohio, which previously had acquired it as a part of the so-called "four-system" plan of consolidation for the railroads east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio and the Potomac, made it part and parcel of the parent road, although retaining most of its offices at Rochester.

Another road out of the Rochester and Buffalo of a quarter

century ago was the old Western New York and Pennsylvania, which gradually had been built up of a line reaching down from Buffalo to Olean, with another from Rochester to Olean (utilizing for many miles the bed of the old Genesee Valley Canal), and some lesser lines. This property, in 1902, passed into the hands of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which at a still earlier date had acquired the railroad leading north from Elmira through Watkins to Canandaigua, with a branch from Stanley through Newark to Sodus Bay.

Of even more interest was the acquisition by the Pennsylvania, at about this time, of the historic Long Island Railroad. Long Island, although politically very much a part of the state of New York, geographically is separated from it. In some ways, it is more like a portion of New England. It developed railroad enterprise at a very early date. The Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad, horse-operated, was completed for the ten miles between those places in 1834. In that same year, the Long Island Railroad Company was incorporated. Its promoters had large plans—particularly for those days. They aimed not only to build a railroad the entire length of Long Island, but to make it a link of a through rail route up the Atlantic seaboard from Charleston to Boston.

In 1836, it began building its line east from Jamaica, and acquired its first steam locomotives, being the seventh road in the United States to adopt the iron horse for its uses. In 1837, the road was completed to Hicksville, and in 1844 to Greenport, where ferry connections were made to the Connecticut shore. There was no railroad along that shore east of New Haven until 1850, and so the Long Island at an early day became a link of an important rail-and-water route between New York and Boston, and so continued for a number of years thereafter.

It continued steadily to expand, building branches and main stems along both the north and the south shores of the island.

In 1869, for the one time in its life, it was threatened with serious competition. Felix E. Reifschneider, in his history of the road, states:

In the year 1869 A. T. Stewart, the famous New York merchant, bought from the town of Hempstead, 7000 acres of land on that vast level tract known as Hempstead Plains, for the sum of \$400,000. This money was known as the "Plains Fund" and was used for the support of the poor and of the schools by the town. In the midst of these plains, just north of the village of Hempstead, Stewart laid out Garden City, destined to be one of the best planned and most beautiful places in America. His first thought was for railroad facilities for Garden City. Accordingly he organized the Central Railroad Company of Long Island in 1871.

This "Stewart Line," as it was generally called, was built in 1872. It used the tracks of the old north side line from Long Island City to Flushing, then struck across the center of the island, intersecting the Long Island road at Creedmoor and, passing Garden City, continued on to Bethpage and to Babylon. It was, from the first, a steady and consistent loser. Eventually the Long Island took it over and abandoned the stretches between Flushing and Creedmoor and for a time those between Garden City and Babylon.

Under the egis of the Pennsylvania, the Long Island has been built into a high-class small railroad, which specializes in short-haul freight and passenger traffic. It provided, from the first, an eastern outlet from the great new Pennsylvania Station in New York, which was opened in 1907; and so, once the greater portion of its strictly suburban lines had been electrified, the Long Island was provided with a splendid passenger terminus in the very heart of Manhattan, with the result that in recent years the resources of even this great terminus have been taxed to provide facilities for the steadily increasing tides of Long Island travel.

Here then are presented the chief factors in the tremendous railroad development of this great state during the past hundred years. There have been smaller lines, some of which, like the Sacketts Harbor and Ellisburg, the Buffalo and Susquehanna, the Poughkeepsie and Eastern, and one or two others, have disappeared. There has been no large new railroad construction since 1892, when the Lehigh Valley put its main line from Geneva through to Rochester, Buffalo and Niagara Falls. At the turn of the century, there was considerable interurban electric railroad construction—from Buffalo through Lockport to Rochester; and, continuing eastward from Rochester, to Geneva and to Syracuse, Utica and Little Falls—much of which has since been abandoned and torn up. This last was a sad chapter in the rail development of the state; but, to a large extent, an unrelated development. Most of the lines—either steam or electric—that have been torn up should never have been put down in the first instance. They were the results of false zeal and enthusiasm. They are gone, and already practically forgotten.

But the main routes through the state have remained and, for the most part, have enjoyed a fair degree of prosperity. For a hundred years now, they have been, and they still remain, the veritable backbone of the transport of the chief commonwealth of the Union. The additions to the main-line running tracks, the great interchange and terminal yards, the building of huge terminal structures, both freight and passenger, have all added to the efficiency of these essential carriers. They never have been better prepared for the handling of the heavy traffic of a great state than they are at this moment. Their task is by no means done. It is hardly more than well begun.

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— VII —

THE RISE OF THE  
FACTORY SYSTEM

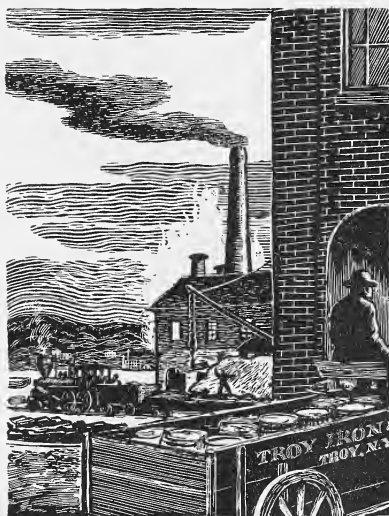
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## THE RISE OF THE FACTORY SYSTEM

### THE TEXTILE INDUSTRIES—COTTON, WOOL, FLAX AND HEMP

NOT even New England was more diversified industrially during the first half of the nineteenth century than New York State. The amazing gamut of its manufactured goods included textiles, hardware, cutlery, tools, stoves, brass and tinware, silverware, jewelry, copper, lead, leather and leather goods, glass, brick, hats, furniture, starch, sugar, chemicals, machinery, lumber and woodenware, wagons, carriages and omnibuses, pottery, tobacco, liquors, gristmill products, and musical instruments.

According to the Federal census of 1840—a not altogether reliable document—the state's manufacturing output of \$95,000,000 represented a gain of nearly 60 per cent over the figure reported by the even more inaccurate state census of 1835. The manufactures of New York City alone were valued at \$23,364,557, or 242 per cent of the former total. Of the 13,677 enterprises reported in 1840, 111 were cotton factories, 234 woolen factories, 293 iron works, 337 distilleries, and 412 tanneries. In proportion to population, New York City, even in 1840, was producing more than its share of the state's manufactures. In that year, the city contained but 13 per cent of the total inhabitants of the state and only 9 per cent of the persons gainfully employed. Yet 67 per cent of those gainfully employed in the city were engaged in some form of manufacture, while only 25 per cent of those employed in the whole state gained their livelihood in such wise. With these figures in mind, it is interesting to note that while the city produced large quantities of metal ware, sugar, musical instruments, ships and furniture, its output in other lines was exceedingly small. Its

textile manufactures, for example, amounted to only 5 per cent of the state's total; hardware, 8 per cent; brick, 2 per cent; carriages and wagons, 9 per cent; paper, 6 per cent; cordage, 3 per cent; and earthenware, 9 per cent. For the large proportion of grist, saw and paper mills, textile factories, iron works, distilleries, breweries, tanneries and brick-making establishments, of course, one had to seek outside New York City.

Of New York's many manufactures, the textiles occupied preëminent rank. Household manufacture of textiles appears to have been undiminished prior to 1830. Indeed, the large number of carding machines in use in the state is evidence of this fact; in 1820, Dutchess County alone had 117 of these machines in operation. The amount and variety of the goods made in the home during these years are remarkable. Itemized statements of such products awarded premiums by the Ontario County Agricultural Society for 1822 indicate both the extent and variety of such household production. One example will suffice:

In the family of Seth Jones, Bristol: 319 yards of linen cloth, 25 of kersey for bags, 32 of shirting, 35 of diaper, 52 of cotton and linen, 199 of woolen cloth, 16 of kersey for blankets, 24 of plain flannel for blankets, 28 of cotton and wool, 34 of cotton, 22 of worsted, 30 pairs of socks, 7 pairs of stockings, 3 pairs of mittens, 5 bed quilts, 1 carpet, 27 pairs of pantaloons, 23 frocks, 2 surtouts, 4 coats, 4 sailor coats, 12 aprons, 1 bed tick, 7 blankets, 10 flannel sheets, 20 linen sheets, 30 shirts, 5 vests and 12 kersey bags.

In all probability, approximately 10,000,000 yards of cloth were manufactured in New York State homes in 1820. After 1830, however, household textile production declined sharply, giving way rapidly to the factory system.

Although hard hit by conditions immediately following the War of 1812, some of the textile factories managed to survive, and after the financial crisis of 1818-19 the industry as a whole

slowly gained ground. In 1819, John Given (sometimes spelled Gibbons) erected a stone cotton factory at Wappingers Falls. The next year, in company with George Everson, he purchased a cotton establishment at Pleasant Valley. About the same time, new concerns commenced production at Kinderhook and Stockport, in Columbia County. Despite complaints concerning losses during the depression and discouragingly low prices, the cotton manufacturing business in Oneida and other counties was distinctly on the up grade. Factory production of woolens increased less rapidly than that of cotton; nevertheless, in 1822 three "extensive" woolen manufactories were opened in Oneida County. The following year, Jesse Scofield and Dr. Capron established the Franklin Company at Walden, in Orange County, with a capital of \$100,000. A list of incorporated companies manufacturing textiles in the state in 1823, printed in the *Albany Argus*, states that there were 36 cotton concerns and 62 engaged in cotton and woolen fabrication.

Not only did textile establishments increase in number, but also in efficiency. Soon after the close of the Napoleonic wars, Mowry, who had set up the first successful textile mill in the state, and Wild, manager of the Columbia Manufacturing Society's mill just outside of Hudson, went to England. Refused entrance to factories there, they entered a door marked "Positively No Admittance" and succeeded in inspecting a newly-invented machine for cotton spinning, known as the double spreader. Upon their return, they constructed a duplicate of the machine. About the same time, William Copley, a machinist in the employ of Benjamin Walcott, set up the first power loom in the Oneida Manufacturing Society's mill at Whitestown. Its use became general within a few years. In 1822, the manufacture of textile machinery was undertaken at Matteawan (now Beacon), in Dutchess County. Production of finer fabrics on a considerable scale was first undertaken by Benjamin Marshall,

a native of Scotland who came to New York in 1803. After twenty years' experience as an importing-exporting merchant, Marshall decided to turn to textile manufacture, and purchased Walcott's Whitestown properties, which he renamed the "New York Mills." Shortly after, he established the Ida Mills at Troy; here also, in 1826, he built the Hudson River Print Works. This was the first example in New York State of a concern undertaking, on a large scale, the complete production and distribution of cotton textiles. Simon Dexter of Oriskany, testifying before the House Committee on Manufactures in 1828, stated that he knew of no other factory in the United States weaving cottons as fine as those of the New York Mills. Their cloth was said to be the standard for fine fabrics wherever produced.

After 1830, the factory system of textile production expanded amazingly. Although cotton manufactures were concentrated in Oneida, Dutchess, Rensselaer, Otsego and Columbia Counties, the industry was by no means confined to these regions. Cohoes, for example, developed into an important textile town. After several futile attempts to establish factories there, a group of New York City capitalists headed by Peter Harmony and including H. J. Wyckoff, P. H. Schenck and others, incorporated the Harmony Cotton Manufacturing Company in 1836. Although for some years it made no profit, it was, by 1840, the largest cotton concern in the state. While its textile production has never been exceptionally large, New York City was not without its cotton factories in 1840. Among the more important metropolitan mills was that of Alexander Knox, which used a hundred thousand yards of yarn annually in the production of some fifty varieties of cloth. There was also the Eagle Manufacturing Company, located in Greenwich Village, for the "manufacture of cotton, woolen and linen goods."

It is difficult to estimate the progress of the factory system in the field of woollens. Census enumerators were certainly too

liberal in their use of the word "factory." Undoubtedly many establishments enumerated were very small concerns, supplementing local household production by custom work. Andrew W. Young, in his *History of Chautauqua County*, records the setting up of many such shops, established first for carding and fulling, and extended presently to other manufacturing operations. It would be a mistake, however, to regard these small manufactories as insignificant, for they performed a very important function with reference to rural woolen manufacture.

But the state was not without extensive woolen mills. In 1831, the Oriskany Manufacturing Company had 147 employees, and Peter Schenck's Glenham Company had almost as many. The following table affords a comparison of the seven larger mills in 1831, with the total returns from thirty-three factories comprising, according to McLane's report, almost all the larger woolen factories of the state.

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Wages</i>	<i>Value of Wool Used</i>	<i>Value of Product</i>	<i>Number of Yards Produced</i>
Glenham.....	Dutchess	\$140,000	130	\$ 27,000	\$ 61,500	\$145,000	48,000
Washington and Lagrange	"	40,000	52	12,708	27,600	51,250	20,500
Franklin Co.....	Orange	100,000	76	14,000	30,000	66,500	190,000
McNamara Co...	Rensselaer	45,000	57	6,800	30,000	52,000	130,000
Troy.....	"	100,000	122	8,400	33,100	59,400	128,000
Oriskany.....	Oneida	160,000	147	18,500	83,750	130,000	88,000
New York State		\$895,377	1,203	\$160,000	\$402,659	\$832,003	1,282,722

By 1840, woolen manufacture on a factory basis was well advanced. It must be remembered, however, that, even at that date, the large majority of the mills were small, and that family production of wools, while decreasing, was still a significant factor in the state's textile economy. The following table shows

the status, in 1840, of woolen manufacture in the five counties outstanding in that industry, as compared with the state as a whole:

<i>County</i>	<i>Number of Mills</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Number of Employees</i>	<i>Value of Products</i>	<i>Number of Fulling Mills</i>
Dutchess .....	6	\$343,000	336	\$339,949	15
Oneida .....	23	243,300	371	321,195	40
Orange .....	13	215,700	228	257,500	14
Jefferson .....	11	273,800	292	205,300	22
Madison .....	10	235,050	244	200,610	26
New York State ..	323	\$3,469,949	4,636	\$3,537,337	890

It should be noted that Dutchess, the leading county, had in operation only 6 mills. Even more indicative of change is the number of fulling mills, 15 in this county, where there had been 117 in 1821. Another significant detail shown by the table is the continuance in a less urban region, Oneida, of smaller factories and a considerable number of fulling mills.

#### SILK, KNIT GOODS, CARPETS AND CLOTHING

Little interest was taken in the culture of silkworms and the fabrication of silk in the state prior to 1825. In 1801, Peter Delabigarre, in addressing the New York State Agricultural Society, enthusiastically declared:

Gentlemen, you have in your hands all the means requisite for success, and for enriching yourselves by the culture of silk. It remains with you to compare and judge your many attempts in it, and discover wherein they have been defective.

Some little effort was made to verify this prediction; here and there a farmer produced a small quantity, sometimes peddling it about the countryside. Samuel Chidsey, who had several years

previously introduced the culture of silkworms in Cayuga County, is reported to have sold sewing silk to the value of \$600 a year. The census, in 1810, recorded one manufactory for the state, the value of the product of which was only \$1,000. A decade later, two men were engaged in making silk in New York City. Another shop combined the fabrication of silk with that of linen and cotton.

Interest in silk increased in the decade of the twenties, however. Monographs were published on the means of reviving and extending silk culture. Committees of Congress listened to the testimony of foreign experts and native enthusiasts. In 1829, G. B. Clark, of New York, received a grant of 262 acres of government land at Greenbush, on condition that he should set out 100,000 mulberry trees. In Oneida County, several villagers were already reeling their first crop of cocoons and were optimistic about the future of the industry. John d'Homergue came from France and agreed, if Congress would provide the funds, to set up a complete power factory where young men might be trained in the technique of silk manufacture. The refusal of Congress to vote the money brought the scheme to naught. In his annual message of 1830, Governor Throop called attention to the adaptability of silk, and two years later a bill was introduced in the legislature to encourage propagation of mulberry trees and silk culture.

The enthusiasm thus created for development of the silk industry continued for many years. In Oneida County, the manufacture of sewing silk was extended. Here, as elsewhere, attention was directed to the special advantages of silk production as a means of employment for the young and the feeble, and especially for the inmates of poorhouses. Societies for promoting the industry were formed in various communities, and in all parts of the state individuals engaged with spirit in the culture, and they pressed for legislative support of what seemed

to give promise of becoming a great industry. At the fair sponsored by the American Institute, prizes were awarded to New York exhibitors, several of whom raised two crops of cocoons a year. These exhibits were the product of domestic manufacture. The silk was reeled, and oftentimes very inexpertly, by hand, spun on an ordinary wool wheel, dyed, doubled and twisted into thread, or fashioned into woven fabrics.

A number of concerns were also organized to undertake silk manufacture. The first of these establishments of which we find mention was located in New York City. In 1830, John McRae opened a factory at 410 Hudson Street for the manufacture of plush, ribbon, fringes, tassels and braids. George Elliott made silk fringe; John Morrison, of 168 Sixteenth Street, made silk handkerchiefs; Daniel Sparks, of 165 Elm Street, and John Mabbett, of 177 Grand Street, produced sewing silk. Inventions were devised to improve the technique of manufacture. Gamaliel Gay, of Poughkeepsie, in 1835 patented improved devices for reeling silk, and a power loom reported to have been more rapid than cotton looms on material of equal fineness. That year, a factory, elaborate for those days, was erected by the Poughkeepsie Silk Company, to manufacture silk produced on several farms it had purchased in the vicinity. An exhibition of ten or twelve varieties of silk fabric, woven at Providence on Gay's looms, induced groups of business men at Troy, Albany and New York to form companies devoted to silk husbandry and fabrication. Although hard hit by the financial panic of 1837, which forced nine-tenths of eastern silk factories, including the Poughkeepsie Silk Company, to suspend operations, the industry survived. True, the state census of 1840 reported a total of only slightly over \$8,000 as being devoted to silk manufacture, and the production of raw silk as amounting to 1,735 pounds. These figures, however, are incorrect, and therefore



misleading. Auburn Prison alone is said to have produced, in 1841, sewing silk worth approximately \$13,000. Moreover, letters to the National Convention of Silk Growers and Silk Manufacturers, held in New York City in 1843, indicate pretty conclusively that silk growing among the farmers of the state had not diminished, although there was much diversity and crudity, both of culture and fabrication. Cocooneries were maintained in barns, in hen houses, in garrets and in sheds. A Brooklynite even advocated the efficacy of hatching silkworm eggs by the simple expedient of taking them to bed with one at night. Books were studied and practical information exchanged among growers, in an attempt to arrive at a proper technique. James Underhill, of Orange County, informed the convention that, within a mile of his village, several persons were engaged in silk raising, and several more intended "to do something at feeding next season." In Chautauqua County, considerable quantities of sewing silk were also being produced.

By 1850, it was evident that the optimism evinced in the early literature on silk growing was unwarranted. Cocoons could be grown but, on the whole, not at a profit. The worms were subject to various diseases; in 1844 a blight seriously affected the mulberry trees; ignorance of basic processes made manufacture crude and expensive; manufacturers preferred the better-reeled European silk, and only by hours of tedious labor could any money be made. The small shops in New York to which we have alluded continued to operate, using imported silk, but no organization undertook again to combine culture and manufacture. In 1846, the *New York State Register* reported that during the previous year no less than 1,600 persons in the state were engaged in silk growing. Expectations of lucrative returns, however, were apparently blasted. Thereafter, silk culture declined.

Vastly more significant in the state's industrial history than

silk was the manufacture of flax and hemp. The fiber of flax and hemp, like that of long staple wool, was combed, not carded. This fundamental operation was more difficult mechanically than carding, and remained manual in America until 1860. Linen manufacture was retarded because the highly skilled labor required made it unprofitable. In the field of household fabrication, flaxen cloth was soon replaced by cheap cottons. A very careful search reveals the existence of only two factories for the weaving of linen in the state before 1850. One, the Schaghticoke Linen Mills, organized about 1800 by Benjamin and Charles Joy of Rensselaer County, was reported in 1820 to be operating two-thirds of its 228 spindles. In 1840, it was capitalized at \$15,000 and employed 90 persons, and was at that time the only linen establishment in the state. The other factory was started by ambitious persons on a rather pretentious scale in New York City in 1827, but it did not prosper. Another metropolitan concern, the Linen Company, incorporated in 1815, was still existent in 1830. Despite this poor showing, considerable interest was taken in flax production. Indeed, in the annual messages of 1828 and 1830, the state executive emphasized the possibilities of improving and maintaining flax as well as hemp culture. In 1826, W. Hunt and W. Hoskins of Martinsburg, Lewis County, patented a spinning machine that was intended to revolutionize flax manufacture. Two years later, a legislative committee reported on the petition of Joseph Hines, of Rensselaer County, for a loan to enable him to build a machine devised by him for the dressing of flax and hemp, which would prevent the deterioration caused by dew rotting.

Hemp culture and manufacture also received attention. In 1830, the legislative committee on agriculture presented a report on the practicability of raising and manufacturing hemp, and asked leave to introduce a bill for a bounty. That year, the New Berlin Hemp Company was incorporated. In 1840, New

York raised hemp valued at \$212,440, principally in Chenango, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Westchester Counties.

The manufacture of hemp and flaxen cordage was rather extensively carried on in the state. A spinning machine, introduced by John Westerman in 1834, was opposed by workmen because its labor-saving features threw men out of work. The census of 1840 listed nearly 50 hemp manufacturing establishments. Moreover, the value of rope produced had advanced from \$602,594 in 1835 to \$792,910 five years later, when there were 597 men employed in the cordage trade.

Three other manufactures, which in reality are part of the textile industry, deserve brief mention, namely, carpets, knit goods and clothing. Prior to 1845, carpets were not only woven by hand, but were considered as a luxury to be found only in the homes of the well-to-do. Nevertheless, in 1821, John and Nicholas Haight were said to be making large quantities of carpeting in New York City. At Great Falls, Saratoga County, according to McLane's Report, 6,000 yards were manufactured in 1831. Several other establishments are reported to have been engaged in its manufacture during the next few years at Hudson, Schenectady, Cohoes and Poughkeepsie.

In the latter city, Henry Winfield's Ingrain Carpet Factory turned out in 1836 no less than 100,000 yards three-ply, superfine, fine and common ingrain carpeting and twilled Venetian stair carpets. Prior to 1850, carpet manufacture in the state was comparatively small. Beginning about the middle of the century, however, the industry gathered momentum. By the eve of the Civil War, the village of Amsterdam, owing to the efforts of W. K. Greene and Stephen Sanford and son, had become a thriving carpet-manufacturing center.

The development, about 1830, of a successful power-operated knitting machine by Timothy Bailey, of Albany, and by Egbert Egberts and Joshua Bailey, at Cohoes, marked the beginning of

a very important industry. Egberts and Bailey began manufacturing with two remodeled machines; Bailey peddled the products about the countryside, taking return orders for goods, the proceeds of which he paid over to female operatives. In 1836, they enlarged their plant in Cohoes and installed cards and mules; but the sale of knit goods moved slowly, and by 1841 the entire output of the Egberts and Bailey plant did not exceed \$40,000 in value. In this connection, C. H. Adams stated in 1866, before the National Association of Knit Goods Manufacturers, that he remembered Egberts going about New York City and actually begging merchants to permit him to leave a sample.

The manufacture of clothing during these years was largely confined to New York City. Although custom-made garments remained more popular than the ready-made article for a surprisingly long time, the manufacture and sale of the latter showed considerable increase by 1850. The gain was in a measure due to the demand of the growing middle class for a cheaper grade of dignified clothing. In order to lower prices, the tailors found it necessary to turn out large quantities of standard sizes and shapes. Consequently, custom tailors began to employ their journeymen in slack times in the making up of left-over suiting. Gradually they extended their operations until soon they were purchasing raw materials to be used especially in the manufacture of ready-made clothes in dull seasons. To many of the masters, this line became as important as the made-to-order trade. By 1840, the new industry was firmly intrenched and establishments were appearing which gave it their whole attention, though most tailors continued their custom-made line.

The organization of the new clothing manufacture followed closely the custom-made system. In both, the master provided the capital and brains, and organized the technical and commercial processes. The preparation and cutting of the cloth

were done in the master's shop; then the material was worked up by journeymen either in their homes, or in shops which they hired jointly, or in the master's own establishment. As the need for lowering wages in order to reduce prices became more apparent, the tailor began to tap the vast supply of female labor. At first women performed only the simple unskilled processes, but the introduction of the sewing machine in the late forties quickly widened the scope of their work until they could perform practically all of the tasks.

New York City's clothing establishments were many. By 1830, some of them were employing from three to five hundred hands, chiefly women. Among the custom tailors were Allen W. Hardie, of 196 Fulton Street; and Richard Calrow, of 10 and subsequently of 4 Wall Street. A few of the clothing makers catered especially to the ladies. Thus M. Jefferys, 287 Broadway, boasted that he made riding habits and pelisses "warranted to fit in a beautiful style; not in curves or creases, as is very commonly seen, and sometimes altogether spoiling the figure of the wearer." Farther up the main thoroughfare, at 315½ Broadway, was located the establishment of John Thomas, where dresses were manufactured for sale to a feminine community which up to this time had depended almost entirely upon its own initiative for creation of its apparel.

### THE METALLURGICAL INDUSTRIES

In variety and value, the metallurgical industries were no less important than the textiles. Of these, iron and steel ranked first. Even more fortunate than its sister state, Pennsylvania, in iron-ore resources, New York, prior to 1850, produced considerable quantities of iron. Most of the ore was found in two localities, namely, in the southern highlands, particularly in Orange County, and in the Champlain area. In 1828, the latter region

produced about three thousand tons of bar iron. Pig-iron production for the entire state during this year totaled 135,000 tons. By the middle of the nineteenth century, furnaces and rolling mills were numerous in the Hudson River-Lake Champlain Valleys and in Saint Lawrence and Jefferson Counties. The hematite ores of the Clinton formation were mined in Oneida and Wayne Counties. A few furnaces and mills were also to be found in the central and western portions of the state.

All of the state's ore before 1830 was smelted in exactly the same manner as was employed at the close of the Revolution. Although several attempts were made to discover a more efficient fuel than charcoal, it was not until 1830 that a workable furnace, which would burn anthracite, was developed by Frederick Geissenhaimer, a Lutheran clergyman of New York City. Three years later, he patented the process and commenced the manufacture of iron. Utilization of coal along with other new processes, such as hot blasts, rolling and puddling for refining, increased furnace capacity, and economized labor, made possible the physical expansion of establishments, and led to reorganization of the industry.

Two urban communities, Troy and New York City, early became the leaders in the fabrication of iron and steel products. The germ of what ultimately became the Troy Steel and Iron Company was the Troy Iron and Nail Company. In 1824, the property of this concern included a rolling and slitting mill, a nail factory and "sundry shops for other mechanical business." Already it had plans for expansion. Under the leadership of Henry Burden, a Scotch engineer who in 1822 became superintendent of the plant, new and more efficient machines were introduced, many of them being of Burden's own invention. Among them were the wrought-iron and spike machine, patented in 1825, and the horseshoe-nail machine invented in 1830.

Five years later, Burden patented a remarkable device which, subsequently improved, shaped a piece of bar iron into a horseshoe in four seconds. In 1836, he furnished the company with a machine for production of hook-headed spikes to fasten T and H railroad rails, then beginning to supersede flat rails. In 1839, he added to his reputation by devising what became known as "Burden's rotary concentric squeezer," for the compression of balls of puddled iron into blooms. This invention, in the opinion of the commissioner of patents, was "the first truly original and most important invention known at that time for the manufacture of iron." In 1848, Burden acquired complete ownership of the Troy Iron and Nail Factory.

If the prints of Troy's horseshoes marked the highways of the globe, as one of her chroniclers asserted, it is no less true that her other iron manufactures were extensive and far-famed. These included stoves, bells, passenger and freight cars, carriages and wagons, and surveyors' instruments. The casting of stove plates began in Troy in 1821, under the leadership of Charles and Nathaniel Starbuck. By 1855, the city had seven foundries which turned out stoves to the value of \$1,000,000 per year. The city's first bell factory was built in 1825 by Julius Hanks, who with his son Oscar was soon to become Troy's leading manufacturer of surveyors' instruments. In 1841, another Troy firm, Eaton and Gilbert, began making passenger and freight cars. It was this firm which built the first eight-wheeled passenger cars used on the Schenectady and Troy Railroad.

The manufacture of vehicles was one of Troy's earliest industries. The firm of Veazie and Barnard was well known for its coaches and carriages during the War of 1812; Eaton and Gilbert, mentioned above, was founded in 1831 for the manufacture of carriages and stagecoaches. Under date of May 8, 1827, the *Troy Sentinel*, with considerable pride, remarked:

The improvement in the mode of conveyance in this country is not confined to steamboats and water, as those may well testify who recollect the difference between our light, elegant and convenient stage-coaches with their springy seats and easy motion, and the lumbering vehicles which were in use for the purpose some twelve or fifteen years ago. We are happy to know that the public are indebted to the ingenuity and enterprise of citizens of Troy for some of the additional conveniences. The valuable improvement of fixing a seat over the baggage and a railing round the top of the carriage was first introduced, we believe, by Mr. Charles Veazie of this city; and in one of the elegant stage-coaches lately turned out from the shop of O. Eaton, we notice a still further improvement of a similar kind.

In 1850, 100 stagecoaches, 50 omnibuses, 30 passenger cars and 150 freight cars were made at the extensive works of Eaton, Gilbert and Company.

New York City's claim to distinction as an iron manufacturing center really dates from Geissenhaimer's invention. As late as 1830, the city had only nine furnaces which together produced slightly more than 3,160 tons of pig metal. Within five years, five additional works had been established and the production of iron had become the city's most important industry. By 1840, the value of its iron and steel products totaled \$2,373,100 and required the services of 2,362 persons for their fabrication. These products may be conveniently grouped into three categories: machinery, including locomotives; hardware and cutlery; and miscellaneous.

Of all the city's ironmasters, James Peter Allaire was probably best known. Beginning as a bronze caster in 1813, he soon acquired by purchase Robert Fulton's Jersey City iron business, which he removed to his foundry in Cherry Street. Here he began the manufacture of steam engines, which at once won him fame. His factories were also well known for their production of hollow ware, sadirons, wood screws and other ferrous



fixtures. Outstanding among his competitors was Henry Warrall, who operated a foundry at 26 Elm Street, where he specialized in light castings. Warrall's hollow ware won him a premium at the fair of the American Institute in 1829. The Columbian Foundry, at 72 Duane Street, operated by Robert McQueen, at this time the oldest in the city, was probably the first to engage in the production of stationary engines as a specialty. Another of some years' standing was the Sterling Iron Company, incorporated in 1814. William Kimball's plant on the North River, at the foot of Beach Street, was connected with the West Point Foundry at Cold Spring, which built the locomotives "Phoenix" and "West Point" for the South Carolina Railroad, and the "De Witt Clinton" for the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad. Two other water-front concerns—Edward Dunscomb's rolling and slitting mill on Corlaer's Hook near Walnut Street, and the Peru Iron Company at 32 South Street—should also be mentioned.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, steel production in the United States trailed that of England. In the thirties, however, two steel plants, one in New York City and the other in Pittsburgh, began to rival the English plants in quality of product made from ore mined in the region along the border between New York and Connecticut. Altogether there were forty steel furnaces operating in various parts of the country in 1831. Of these, fourteen were located in New York, one of them being the establishment of Oliver L. Clark on West Street. The refined iron and steel was cast into a variety of articles—locomotives, saws, jackscrews, plows, cutlery, locks and tools of various kinds.

Like Troy, the metropolis of the state boasted a number of stove manufactures. Stoves were not very popular until the late twenties, when Jordan L. Mott adapted them to the burning of anthracite coal. To ignite and utilize this form of fuel,

Mott—after whom Mott Haven is named—found that it was necessary to construct stoves made of very thin, curved plates and of iron of fine grade. Mott's plant adjoined the Harlem Bridge on the Morrisania, or Bronx, side of the Harlem River. So well thought of were his products that at the 1834 exposition of the American Institute he received diplomas for anthracite cooking and office stoves. One of his specialties was a self-feeding base burner, supplied with chestnut coal by an attached magazine. Mott was not without competitors, his rivals including James Wilson and Company, 206-8 Water Street; H. Nott and Company, who manufactured the stove patterned by Dr. Eliphalet Nott, president of Union College; and William Naylor and Company, 5 Chatham Square.

Albany and Ulster Counties, as well as Buffalo and Amsterdam and a number of other localities, were lesser centers of iron and steel manufacture. Among the early nineteenth-century Albany concerns was the Albany Rolling and Slitting Mill. Built by John Brinkerhoff and Company in 1807, it passed, in 1826, into the hands of Erastus Corning, who gave it the name of the Albany Nail Factory. In 1830, this factory alone produced 825 tons of rolled iron, of which 450 tons were cut into nails. Eight years later, the concern again changed ownership and became the Albany Iron Works. In 1839, the first puddling, or conversion of pig iron into wrought iron, was undertaken by this concern. The manufacture of wrought iron by this process had not been successfully undertaken elsewhere in the state, except at the Ulster Iron Works, in Ulster County. Iron castings made at Albany were noted for their excellence, and were considered equal to any in the world. Moreover, the hollow ware of Bartlett, Bent and Company was preferred to the best produced in Scottish foundries. As early as 1814, the firm of S. and A. Waters, of Amsterdam, had a \$6,000 plant which turned out annually about 1,000 scythes, as well as mill saws and irons. In

1825, the Buffalo Steam Engine Works was incorporated for the manufacture of steam engines, mill gears and other castings.

The gateway to the United States, the city of New York was the focal point of the transportation lines of land and sea. It was natural, therefore, that the manufacture of coaches and omnibuses should early gain a foothold in the metropolis. For a time it was apparently only a foothold, as but one manufactory of coaches and gigs was reported for the city to the United States Senate Committee on Manufactures in 1824. Ten years later, the industry seems to have become more firmly established, for we find the American Institute awarding a silver medal to Isaac Mix and Sons for a "handsome Stanhope," and another to I. Cooke and Sons for a double-seated phaëton which could be transformed into a barouche. Meanwhile, James Brewster, a New Haven capitalist, had established a warehouse and repair shop in New York in 1827.

Early in the eighteen-thirties, when travel was on the increase, John Stephenson turned to the building of omnibuses. Almost at once he began construction, at his Elizabeth Street shops, of what was reported to be the first street car in the United States. Named the "John Mason," it was designed to run on the Harlem Railroad from Prince Street to the Harlem Flats. As railway and street mileage increased, Stephenson found an even larger market for his products. In 1843, his business had so expanded that he found it advisable to move to a four-story building on Twenty-seventh Street near Fourth Avenue.

While iron and steel fabrication overshadowed the other metallurgical industries, the latter were by no means neglected. Work in the precious metals was chiefly confined to the jewelry trade, which was concentrated largely at Philadelphia, Newark, New York and Providence. In New York the leading firm was Stebbins and Howe, who specialized in watches and silverware. At 30 Wall Street, S. W. Benedict cut diamond necklaces and

made gold watch dials from American gold. In the same region were Muller and Ackerman, also makers of gold watch dials and earrings; and near Stebbins and Howe, at 142 Chatham Street, was Jared Moore, famous in his day for his gold and silver-mounted spectacles.

Items in silver are more numerous: embossed soup tureens, chased cake baskets, waiters and embossed and plain pitchers were made by Baldwin Gardner, 146 Broadway; chased and carved silver waiters by William Thompson, of 109 William Street; japanned tea trays by J. Smith, 217 Water Street; pitchers, spoons and forks by Marquand and Company; more pitchers by James Thompson. Stebbins and Howe, in their capacity as clock and watchmakers, had to compete with Uriah Emmons, whose shop on Division Street was moved to Hester Street in 1830; and with Whitney and Hoyt, of 380 Pearl Street. Farther down, at 266 Pearl Street, was the home of clock regulators, owned by J. S. Mott.

While Connecticut gave more attention to the brass industry than any other state, New York City was an important brass-foundry center. Here D. E. Delaven, of 489 Broadway, shaped brass into fire sets, shovels, stair rods, hods, teakettles and stands. Francis Smith, at 96 Center Street, specialized in tongs and shovels; and Peter Bissell, at Sixteenth Street and Ninth Avenue, in brass nails.

New York, Baltimore and Boston, shipbuilding ports, practically monopolized the refining and rolling of copper, as well as its manufacture into commercial shape. Most of the primary raw material had to be imported. In 1813, the plant of Robert R. Livingston was capable of turning out 100 tons of sheet copper per year. On April 9, 1814, the New York Copper Manufacturing Company was incorporated for the purpose of "carrying on and perfecting the manufacture of copper and brass, and the construction of large copper work in gen-

eral." Capitalized at \$250,000, it continued to function at least till 1830.

Tin, and metals plated with tin, served as material for a variety of table ware. James Woodhall, of King Street, manufactured plated casters and other plated ware. William Naylor and Company, the stove makers, also produced tinware; and James Grant, 315 Broadway, turned out dish covers, coffee urns and other table appurtenances. Little seems to have been done with lead manufacture in New York City, although in 1814 a charter was granted to "The Mining, Smelting and Refining Company," which planned, among other things, to erect a tower for the manufacture of shot. In the northern part of the state, however, considerable interest was manifested in the production of graphite, or black lead, large deposits of which, near Ticonderoga, early attracted attention. In 1832, William Stuart and Nathan Delano began to mine it for market. Meeting with success Stuart, in collaboration with his sons, expanded operations. During the decade of the fifties, the business passed into the hands of the American Graphite Company. On the eve of the Civil War, about 500 tons of graphite were being taken from the Ticonderoga area annually. The Rossie Lead Company, chartered in 1837 for lead production near the village of Rossie, Saint Lawrence County, ceased operations in 1839 because of foreign competition. At the time it suspended work, this concern had mined and sold approximately 3,250,691 pounds of lead.

New York City virtually monopolized the manufacture of New York State musical instruments. A wide-open market and the absence of established producers attracted skilled artisans from the Old World, and particularly from the British Isles. A large proportion of these settled in New York City. By the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, the pianoforte had become an important item of manufacture in

the city; 800 pianos were built in the year 1829. Ten years later, the city was producing 38 per cent of the entire national output.

The names of New York piano manufacturers are numerous. Certain persons, however, stand out. Until 1830, John Kearsing and Sons, in business since the opening of the century, occupied the premier position. They trained the brothers Robert, William and John Nunns. The Nunns brothers opened their factory at 96 Broadway in 1824. Largely aided by Charles Sackmeister, an itinerant inventor who was shabbily treated and abominably paid by the profit-seeking manufacturers, the Nunns made revolutionary improvements in their instruments, which were awarded several medals and diplomas at the fairs of the American Institute. Quite unexpectedly they faced opposition and loss of prestige in 1833, when a new-comer, John Osborn, was acknowledged "the best maker" in the city. Coming from Albany three years previously, Osborn had set up shop at 184 Chambers Street, but was soon compelled to seek larger quarters at Third Avenue and Fourteenth Street. Of irascible temperament and belligerent in attitude, Osborn in one of his outbursts committed suicide. Luckily, he left a worthy disciple in Jonas Chickering, who migrated to Boston, there to carry on the manufacture of superior instruments.

Of the other musical instruments, the building of organs deserves at least passing notice. The accepted master was Henry Erben, who pursued his calling for sixty years. When he died in 1884, he had built 146 organs for New York churches, most famous among them being the instruments in Trinity, Saint Stephen's Roman Catholic, Saint Peter's, and the Mott Street Cathedral. On a cheaper scale were the products of Hall and Labagh, who built the organs of the Baltimore Cathedral, Saint Thomas, the Church of the Strangers, Temple Emanu-El, and the Fifth Avenue Collegiate Church. Two other builders,

Richard Ferris and George Jardine, also deserve praise. Practically one-half of the total number of the miscellaneous musical instruments of the country, such as harmonicas, æolians, calliopes, accordions, dulcimers, violins and violincellos, harps, guitars, banjos, flutes, drums, and brass and silver horns, were manufactured in New York State.

### LEATHER AND LEATHER GOODS

The manufacture of leather and leather goods employed a larger number of persons than any other single industry with the possible exception of textiles. Not only was the leather business important in itself, but it had a very direct bearing upon both agriculture and lumbering. Like so many of the other industries of the state, the tanning of skins was carried on both as a regular business and as an incidental family manufacture. While tanneries were to be found in all parts of the state, by far the greater number were located in the Catskill Mountain region and in the valley of the Hudson, where there were abundant forests of hemlock. Shortly after the close of the War of 1812, the New York Tannery Company was organized. Establishing its plant at Hunter, in Greene County, it marketed its first leather in 1818. In 1822, its property passed into the hands of William Edwards and Jacob Lorillard, both prominent in the leather trade at that time; under their supervision, the plant was greatly enlarged and improved.

Meanwhile, other large tanneries were being erected in the Catskill area, which was already becoming the principal source of leather for the New York City market. Of these, the plant established by Zadock Pratt, in Greene County, overshadowed all others. Situated in the midst of a dense growth of hemlock, it housed over 300 vats requiring the annual consumption of 1,500 cords of wood and 6,000 cords of hemlock bark. For a

period of twenty years, the annual output was 6,000 sides of sole leather. At this time, Pratt's tannery was probably the largest in the world. To Pratt's enterprise and public spirit, the village named after him (Prattsville) owed its growth, and the Catskill territory much of its prominence as the principal leather-producing district of the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century. This region alone produced one-third of all the sole leather made in the Union in 1850, and a larger amount of upper leather than any other state. Localities north of Albany, such as Ballston Spa, secured their wood and bark from the foothills of the Adirondacks.

New York City, which, before the middle of the century, had become the largest emporium of foreign hides in the world, also housed a large number of enterprising tanners. These included a goodly number of men of influence and dignity in the community, among whom was John Bloodgood, whose father, Abraham, had been a manufacturer of upper leather. Gideon Lee, a Tammany man, like Bloodgood, agent for the Hampshire Leather Manufactory and one of the organizers of the New York Tannery Company, served as mayor and congressman. Israel Corse, a Hicksite Quaker who led the fight against lotteries, took his son-in-law, Jonathan Thorne, into his leather business in 1828. Thorne later became a landed proprietor by virtue of the inheritance of a farm in Washington, Dutchess County, and the acquisition of a number of adjoining acres which he stocked with choice cattle and christened "Thornedale." William Kumbel, the only maker of leather belts in the United States at this time, was a colonel of the Eleventh Regiment, New York Volunteers. From Poughkeepsie, in 1827, came Morgan L. Smith and Abraham I. Schultz, to open a tannery at the corner of Jacob and Ferry Streets. Smith also was a colonel, an accepted leader of urban society, and he became the only United States consul to the Republic of Texas.



David Moffat, a Scottish immigrant in 1827, soon became a successful harness maker and achieved universal respect.

By 1850, numerous chemical and mechanical changes had been made in the art of tanning, whereby both the quality and quantity were improved. Two citizens of New York State, among others, contributed to these improvements. The first, A. H. Beschorman, patented a device in 1846 by which hides, stretched together in an endless belt or apron, could be passed over a series of rollers, thereby enabling the manufacturer to transform raw materials more easily into the finished product. The second device, that of L. C. England, of Tioga County, patented in 1847 and improved during the fifties, was more simple and consisted of a paddle-wheel arrangement for stirring the vat liquors, which proved to be a great labor saver. By 1850, the value of common and Morocco leather made in New York State alone exceeded \$22,000,000.

With an abundance of raw materials, it was but natural that a thriving leather-goods industry should come into being. According to the 1840 census, New York City had over two hundred leather manufactories. At 165 Water Street, for example, Richard Yeo fashioned leather undergarments "much more conducive to health as well as more pleasant to wear than flannel." Leather shirts, buckskin gloves, mittens, parchment and drumheads rounded out his stock of merchandise. For pocketbooks and reticules, the ladies were invited to patronize Edward C. Chantry, at 9 Maiden Lane; T. Bussing, of 76 William Street; and Farless and Gopsill, 116 William Street, who made "every article in the Morocco line, of every pattern and color."

Manufactories of saddlery, boots and shoes and trunks were to be found in every town of any considerable importance. Certain communities, notably Albany, Gloversville, Johnstown, Newburgh and New York City were outstanding. Indeed, be-

fore the middle of the century, the latter had achieved prominence as a shoe-manufacturing center. Inasmuch as the boot and shoe business was still on a handicraft basis, it employed a larger number of persons than any other branch of the leather industry. The manufacture of dressed deerskins for gloves, money belts and underclothing, was started in the village of Gloversville by Ezekiel Case, in 1803. Subsequently, under the leadership of W. T. Mills and James Burr, who became noted glove manufacturers, the business extended to the neighboring community of Johnstown.

### THE LUMBER INDUSTRY AND ITS ALLIES

No less extensive in their ramifications than the fabrication of leather goods were the lumber industry and its allies—potash, charcoal, woodenware, furniture, and wood pulp and paper. With extensive forest areas, a desire for additional cleared land, and a ready market for timber products, it was inevitable that from the first this group of industries should assume prime importance. Every stream of any size had its sawmill, and the use of steam made possible the erection of plants not operated by water power. As in colonial times, Albany was the center of the lumber industry.

Ogdensburg, Watertown, Buffalo, Glens Falls, Newburgh, as well as many towns along the route of the Erie Canal, had large mills. "Asheries" for the manufacture of potash, and pits for charcoal production were also numerous. Both of these industries were carried on in primitive fashion, as in colonial days. Much of the potash produced in the northern part of the state was marketed in Montreal. By the middle of the nineteenth century, potash manufacture, as a business, was largely a thing of the past. The use of charcoal was also on the decline.

In the shaping of wood into articles of practical value, the

state was in the forefront. Kitchen utensils, cabinet ware and furniture of all styles and varieties were made, for both the domestic and the foreign market. Much of it was homemade, or produced in small shops on a handicraft basis. Particularly was this true of the city of New York; clustered along the lower West Side, along Greenwich and Broad Streets and dotting Broadway, the Bowery, Chatham, Beekman and Hudson Streets, were dozens of small shops where artisans sharply competed for business. Of them all, Duncan Phyfe, Scottish immigrant, was most famous; for twenty-five years he set the standards in furniture making. His restraining influence held the heavy, awkward Empire modes at bay, and only succumbed when financial straits demanded compliance with vulgar standards.

While ranking behind New England in the production of paper, New York, with its favorable metropolitan market for paper products, rated as a leader in paper manufacture. In 1810, official reports credited the state with twelve mills, located in the Hudson Valley from Troy southward. By the close of the War of 1812, Troy was forging ahead as a paper-producing center; from 1830 to 1850, owing largely to the efforts of Joseph, Thomas and Peleg Howland, it was the leading paper-manufacturing city in the state. Prior to 1850, rags constituted the principal raw material for this industry. Henceforth numerous experiments with straw, corn husks and wood fiber were made, with the ultimate result that spruce and balsam wood gradually came into use. Stripped of its bark and ground into pulp, this wood filled a need of long standing. With the increased use of spruce and balsam, it was only natural that the pulp and paper business should locate where there was an abundance of water power and of these forests. Consequently, Watertown, Ticonderoga, Glens Falls, Palmer Falls (Corinth), Sandy Hill (Hudson Falls), Fort Edward, Mechanicville, Schuylerville, the towns along the Ausable River and the

Kayaderoseras and Battenkill, tributaries of the Hudson River, soon gained renown for their pulp and paper production.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SHIPBUILDING

Shipbuilding was largely confined to the Hudson and East River fronts, Buffalo, and the Lake Champlain towns of Westport and Port Henry. In this industry, New York City overshadowed all others. In 1840, the value of the ships produced there exceeded the total of the vessels built in every other shipbuilding community in the country. Truly Manhattan Island was "the headquarters of the shipbuilding of the world." Despite recurring depressions during the long period from the close of the Revolution to the Civil War, the water-front streets of the metropolis almost continuously resounded with the blows of the carpenter's ax, the tapping of the caulker's hammer and the buzz of the timber saw. The East Side, from Jefferson Street for a mile and a half north to Thirteenth Street, was covered with piles of white oak, hackmatack and locust, destined to be converted into ribs; with yellow pine for keelsons and ceiling timbers, white pine for floors, and live oak for "aprons."

New York had participated in the wide-scale building of merchantmen and privateers during the Napoleonic wars; yet it was not till the close of the second war of the United States against Britain that East River ship craftsmen began to set the national fashions. These enterprising builders ushered in the era of packets, those sailing vessels which cleared from port to port at regular intervals and, barring acts of God, maintained a predetermined schedule. They ran between specially selected points only, and were equipped to carry six hundred to a thousand passengers and a thousand tons of freight. The unrelenting rivalry of shipyard against shipyard called forth the highest degree of skill in designing and constructing. In order to hold their

own, builders were forced to study the scientific principles of design and sparring. They imported books on the subject; took lessons from United States naval constructors; experimented with models; and cut up and analyzed the denizens of the sea. As a result, New York acquired a group of the most highly-qualified builders in the world. They gave their brigs and ships strength, speed, stability, ease of handling, beauty and comfortable accommodations. At the height of their business, six thousand men were employed in the naval construction going on at twenty yards.

Constant improvement resulted in a decidedly superior brand of ocean carrier. Foreign nations, realizing New York's pre-eminence in this line, placed order after order with one or another of the firms. The South American governments, newly free, rushed to provide themselves with naval defense. In response to orders from Mexico and Colombia, two line-of-battle ships, two frigates and two sloops of war were placed on the stocks in the summer of 1825. One frigate "of the largest class, pierced for sixty-four guns," was launched at Eckford's yard in September. Another ship, the "Bolivar," with a similar complement of cannon, took its maiden plunge in November. A month later, the Colombian frigate, "South America," was ready for the sea. This latter vessel attracted special notice because of its size and fine fittings; built of live oak and red cedar and finished with brass, she was 180 feet long and carried 60 32-pound guns. When the new year opened, four more southward-bound ships were in process of construction. By spring, several of these were on the water, among them the Mexican brig, "America," a 600-ton specimen of New York's highest-grade handiwork. Henry Eckford found most favor with foreign governments; it was he who supplied a large portion of the navies of Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Chile.

Europeans also recognized the worth of the New Yorkers.

Eckford built a corvette for Turkey and sailed in 1831 to reorganize the navy of that country, but unfortunately died before he had completed a year at his task. William H. Webb provided the French with their first steam ram, the "Dunderberg." Several Spanish frigates took shape on the stocks in the yard of John Englis. The pride of the Czar's navy, the 2,282-ton steam man-of-war, "Kamchatka," was also made in America, in 1838, by William H. Brown. To aid in the valiant struggle against Turkish oppression, the Greek revolutionaries placed orders through their committee in America for three frigates. One, the "Hellas," built by Christian Bergh, reached them without much difficulty. But the other two were long delayed by the machinations of the grafters, who did much harm in this, as in many another righteous movement. Construction had been started as early as June, 1825, but one of the vessels, the "Hope," did not leave the yard of Smith and Dimon till October of the following year. And the departure of this vessel was made possible only by the purchase of its sister ship by the United States government, at a price of \$233,000. When the devious transactions had been terminated, the Greeks found that they had spent \$750,000 for a ship worth considerably less than \$300,000. The committee on arrangements was, of course, suspected, but the cloud of dishonesty, at least of gross profiteering, passed over to the firm of builders; John Dimon's house at the corner of Columbia and Rivington Streets was long called the "Greek" house, the reference being to the huge sum which had been received from the revolting Greeks and presumably expended on the new home.

Despite this seemingly continuous prosperity, the shipbuilding industry experienced ups and downs more exaggerated in the contrasts between peaks and troughs than the general average of all manufactures. The period opened on a high note. The April 1, 1825, issue of the *Evening Post* reported 30 steamboats

built or placed on the stocks within the twelve months immediately preceding. In addition, "a number of other vessels of large size have been launched during the same period, and others are in considerable forwardness." In June, there were 7 frigates and gun ships and 2 corvettes in process of building. By July, this number had jumped to 10 battleships, 12 merchant ships and 8 steamboats. The score for the twelve months following March 31, 1826, was: 23 ships, 3 brigs, 49 schooners, 68 sloops, 12 steamboats, 15 towboats and 19 canal boats. The total of 29,137 tons marked a high spot which was not even approached during the ensuing half decade. An issue of the *Evening Post* in May, 1831, remarked on the amazing activity of the shipyards, a phenomenon which had been absent for the past five years. Only one year before, these same yards had been silent; but a single ship could be found on the stocks and a scant couple were in process of repair. Now, the report runs,

One first rate ship was launched a day or two since and contracts have been entered to build ten others, six of which are already on the stocks . . . a greater number than has been under contract since 1826. Besides these, great numbers of small craft and steamboats are constructing all along the shores and vessels of all burdens are being repaired.

And so the builders thrive. But the story which has now become so old was repeated again in 1834. Depression returned to camp on the doorstep of a "prosperous" nation. The maestros of the shipyards found that the launching of two vessels on May 13 left them without a single order to be filled. This flurry in 1834, however, was but a zephyr in comparison to the gale they were forced to weather three years later. The effects of the 1837 disruption continued for six slowly brightening years. In the middle of the gloom, specifically at the time of the taking of the sixth decennial United States census, Webb, Bergh, Westervelt, *et al.*, found a few rays of encouragement

in the form of a sadly curtailed building program. The value of naval construction for 1840 came to \$354,000, one-fourth of the total for the gala year, 1826. Each of ten firms limped along with a ship or two to occupy its attention, the sum of their endeavors being only a tonnage of 8,315.

Despite the relative paucity of New York's production in this year, its \$354,000 exceeded the total of any other community in the country. Because city and village boundary lines are economically meaningless, the only fair method of comparison is on the basis of entire port regions, such as Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, which included the shipbuilding centers of Kensington and Southwark, near Philadelphia. Here again, the lead was taken by New York City and contiguous localities, Suffolk, Kings, Queens and Richmond Counties and points along the Hudson—all comprising the "Southern District" of New York. The total of \$554,667 produced by this section far outstripped even that of the Massachusetts shipbuilding hives.

The types of seagoing vessels constructed on the west bank of the southern reaches of the East River can be roughly divided according to makers: Liverpool packets by Smith and Dimon, Isaac Webb, Brown and Bell; London and Havre ships by Christian Bergh, Thomas Carnely, Jacob H. Westervelt, William H. Webb; barks, brigs, schooners and sloops by Fickett and Crockett, Westervelt and Mackay, Eckford, Webb, Perine, Patterson and Stack, and George Steers; steamers by Lawrence and Folkes, Devine Burtiss, Bishop and Simonson, William Collyer, Thomas Collyer, and Capes and Allison.

The smaller boats, the sloops, schooners, barks and brigs, never exceeded 350 tons in burden, a good many of the first-named running considerably under 100. But the ships and steamers showed a steady increase in size, as the builders learned more about the principles of weight, strength, speed and endurance. Several famous vessels well illustrate this advance in ton-



age. When the "Mary Howland" left the stocks of Smith and Dimon in 1825, crowds thronged the wharves to see one of the biggest ships of the day, burden, 500 tons. Given nine years of experience, these same builders were able to present the "Independence," 140 feet long, 32 feet wide, 20 feet deep, with a registered tonnage of 734. Unsatisfied, they and their competitors kept constantly enlarging and improving: as a result, the "Liverpool," launched in 1843 by David Brown, had a carrying capacity of 1,174 tons. Most of the packets of the latter part of this period ranged a little below the burden of the "Liverpool," registering anywhere from 900 to 1,100 tons.

These packets were, until 1849, either one or two-decked, with a poop deck aft and a topgallant forecastle forward. They were so arranged that the cargo could be stored in the lower hold and light freight stacked between the decks. In the after portion, the space between decks was divided into cabins. The middle section held the kitchens and pantries. Crew bunks and steerage were "for'rd" and officers' houses on deck. Three-decked packets were introduced in 1849, but by that time clipper ships were beginning to displace all other forms of large seagoing vessels. The era of the picturesque monarch of the waves did not come until after the close of the period under consideration here. So only passing mention may be given to that noblest development of the art of the builder of the sailing ship, the full-rigged, sharp-prowed, long-lined clipper.

The clipper lived but a few decades. But two other innovations of the day have had lasting effects. One was the use of iron as a framework. The signs pointed to the elimination of the huge lumberstacks which lined the water front, and to their replacement by shipments of metal. Iron ships were the subject of a meeting at the Mechanics Institute in the city, in 1840. Attention was called to the fact that their comparative cost in England was less than that of wooden ships, and that a similar

condition seemed to prevail in the United States. Specifically, the minutes reported "for an iron steamboat built by the West Point Foundry Association in this city in 1838, the additional charge over and above an estimate for building the boat in England, was only so much as it would have cost the owners to get the hull from thence into our waters." In 1839, New York was the site of another venture in the use of iron for ships, when a steamboat was constructed from such material for use in Louisiana waters.

The other newcomer to shipbuilding was the vessel propelled by steam. This had, of course, been perfected for practical use by Robert Fulton as far back as 1807. Within a decade, the country had begun to adopt steam as a means of propulsion on rivers and ocean inlets, where the land was always within easy reach. But American mariners persisted in the belief that sail would prove superior on long voyages. This contention was generally accepted because the vessels of the time did not seem capable of carrying sufficient coal to bring them safely through an ocean trip. The "Savannah" utilized both sail and steam power, and consequently was no criterion of the lasting powers of the steamship. The prevailing dubiousness made the builders wary of utilizing steam power in ocean liners. However, the merits of the river steamboat were certain. Thirty were built or placed on the stocks of Manhattan in the twelve months preceding April 1, 1825. By 1832, steam was found to be a practical form of power for coasting vessels, and New York plunged into the construction of these. They were side-wheelers with deep hulls and razor bottoms like sailing ships, and bows and sterns somewhat sharper than the canvas-carrying boats. Their engines were the same in principle as those of the river boats, but the weight of the machinery was brought nearer to the bottom of the hull.

John Englis achieved the greatest distinction in the making of

coasting steamers. After eight years as foreman for Bishop and Simonson and an interlude building lake steamers at Buffalo, he returned to New York to open a yard at the foot of East Tenth Street. Here he had 140,000 square feet of property, in the confines of which he employed as many as 450 men. Hudson River and Long Island Sound steamers of exceptional length were his specialties, some of the most famous being the "St. John" and the "Dean Richmond" of the People's Line to Albany, and the "Newport" and "Old Colony" running to points in New England. Chief competitors in the production of Sound boats were Lawrence and Sneden, whose noblest bids for maritime fame were the "President," the "Boston," the "Empire State," "Granite State" and "Bay State."

The old hesitancy with regard to ocean steamers was swept away in 1838, when English-built vessels reached New York after crossings in which the sole dependence had been upon steam power. Ship tonnages were running well above 1,000; such size betokened plenty of room for coal supplies. The fear of fuel exhaustion gone, the "Lion" and the "Eagle" were started on the stocks, and in 1840 slid into the East River, the first of a long line of steamships that plowed the seven seas.

The Eleventh Ward, in the southeast section of Manhattan Island, was the exclusive home of shipbuilding during these years. The sea was king from Jefferson Street north for a couple of miles to Thirteenth Street, and from the water front inland for three or four blocks. Within the limits of this area, scarcely a man was occupied in anything but the primary job of shipbuilding or in an ancillary pursuit, such as ship chandlery, sailmaking or ropewalking. In 1835, a comparatively short stroll would take the inquisitive visitor past every one of the metropolitan shipyards. Starting with Joseph Martin's between Jefferson and Pike Streets and walking in a northeasterly direction, he would skirt in succession the establishments of

James Morgan and Son at the foot of Rutgers Street; Carpenter and Bishop, and Ficket and Tomes at Clinton Street; Stephen Thorn and Jabez Williams at Montgomery Street; Christian Bergh at Scammel Street; and Sneden and Lawrence at Corlaers Street. Rounding the Hook, he would find himself at Grand Street, immediately facing the yard of Samuel Harnard. Continuing thence almost due north, he would pass the establishment of Brown and Bell, which extended from Stanton to Houston Street; and above that, Smith and Dimon, Fourth to Fifth Street; Webb and Allen, Fifth to Seventh Street; Bishop and Simonson, Seventh to Eighth Street; and yet higher, James and George Steers, William H. Brown and Thomas Collyer.

Outstanding among the proprietors of these yards were Christian Bergh, Henry Eckford, Jacob Bell, Jacob Westervelt, John Englis, Isaac Webb and Stephen Smith. Bergh was probably the most colorful man in the district. Six feet and four inches in height, he commanded all with whom he came in contact. His mastery of the shipbuilder's art was demonstrated during the War of 1812, when the United States frigate, "President," which he had constructed, was captured by the British and used by them as a model of naval architecture. During the war, he suspended personal activities and built vessels for the government on Lake Ontario. His sailing ships were considered by many to have been unsurpassed in design or technique of construction. One of his London packets excelled even the steamships in speed, making the passage to England in fourteen days and ten hours. Swiftmess and the "close rudder," a personally devised innovation, were the distinguishing characteristics of all Bergh creations.

Henry Eckford, Bergh's closest friend, was his most vigorous competitor. Starting in 1800, contemporaneously with Bergh, he also suspended private business to build ships for the government on Lake Ontario. His work in the war won him the post

of naval constructor at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where he built six battleships in the three years from 1817 to 1820. Too zealous devotion to reform and an incapacity for adjusting himself to the constituted authority of the yard officers forced his resignation. Thereafter, he made personal capital out of his undoubted abilities. Strength, speed and constant improvement were the keynotes of his work. Consultation with the captains of the vessels he had built readily revealed strong points and faults, and led to constant changes in the design of frames and the details of rigging.

Jacob Bell and David Brown, whose partnership lasted from 1820 to 1848, achieved prominence as pioneers in the building of ocean steamships and first-class clippers. It was this firm which built the "Lion" and the "Eagle," first New York vessels to make the Atlantic crossing without the aid of sails. And it was these doughty exponents of slender lines and broad canvas who furnished their former pupil, Donald McKay, the chief rivalry in the construction of clipper ships. In 1820, they had taken over the yard of Adam and Noah Brown at the foot of Houston Street, and the following year they launched their maiden ships, the "William Tell" and the "Orbit." The formation of a close business relationship with Edward K. Collins, organizer of the Dramatic Line of packets to England, netted the firm contracts for the "Garrick," "Roscius," "Sheridan" and "Siddons." The excellence of design of these and others of their vessels elicited special commendation from Dr. William A. Dod, lecturer on architecture at the College of New Jersey.

Bergh took one of his former apprentices, Jacob Westervelt, into partnership in his eminently successful business, enabling the latter to retire with a considerable fortune on the dissolution of the firm in 1835. In the fifteen years prior to that date, Westervelt had supervised the construction of 71 vessels, nearly all ranging between 450 and 600 tons. The lure of the sea front,

and of the gain to be derived therefrom, brought Westervelt back to active building on his return from a voyage abroad. His prize vessels in the second period were the ocean steamers, "Washington" and "Sherman," and the clippers, "Sweepstakes," "N. B. Palmer" and "Contest." Another late entrant into the field was John Englis, who founded the only shipyard of the day that survived into the twentieth century. He aided the prosecution of wars by supplying gunboats for the Spaniards, and later several types of vessels for the Union navy.

Still another noted outfit—and this one also a big money-maker—was the combination of Stephen Smith, the builder, and John Dimon, the business manager. Their products were exceedingly varied: the packets "Mary Howland," "Roscoe" and "Independence," each exceptionally large for the time; steamboats for the navigation of the North River; the first "true" clippers, "Rainbow" and "Sea Witch," characterized by their long hollow water line and the sharpening of the forward body and the stern; and the pair of Greek frigates whose costliness has clouded the name of Smith and Dimon.

The most notable achievement of James and George Steers was the construction of the original cup contender, the yacht "America." The name of Steers, however, attaches more significantly, in the history of shipping, to the railway used for drawing vessels out of the water. It was the father, Henry Steers, and his partner, John Thomas, who devised the first ship railway and set it up in 1825, at the foot of East Tenth Street, on the northern edge of the shipbuilding district. The rails were laid on an inclined plane, the lower edge of which was submerged in the water. A cradle, fitted to the rails, carried the ship high and dry, where it could easily undergo repairs. This innovation was hailed with delight as a substitute for the costly and arduous process of mounting a vessel in dry dock. The *New York American* voiced the general satisfaction:

On Thomas' principle of the ship railway, there will probably be no difficulty in hauling out the largest ship in the navy for repairs; because she will receive a general and ample support before she leaves her buoyant element. Dry docks are extremely expensive; and there can be no doubt this invention . . . will be a complete substitute for them.

This prophecy was well advised. In March of the following year, the steamer "Oliver Wolcott," weighing 250 tons, was drawn on the ways by the power of a single horse in one hour and 38 minutes. In the autumn, a 496-ton ship rode lightly into place with the aid of the same contrivance; and by October the dock was in daily use, vessels being hauled up easily without injury.

This was the heyday of American shipping. The first half of the nineteenth century, especially the second quarter thereof, saw the United States at its highest point in the mercantile scale. After the Civil War, the merchant marine became woefully anemic, but until that conflict Americans moved the goods of the world. Such commercial activity required constantly new supplies of ships. And so, despite occasional lacunae, the New York builders were kept almost continuously busy. Naturally, their pocketbooks grew fatter and fatter and every one of them, with the exception of Isaac Webb, retired or died a wealthy man.

#### FLOUR, SUGAR, LIQUOR, SALT AND GLASS

No account of New York's manufactures during this period, when certain processes of industrial production were undergoing revolutionary change, would be complete without some mention of food and drink, such as the manufacture of flour, the refining of sugar, the making of candy, meat packing, and the distilling and brewing of intoxicating beverages.

Flour milling, like lumbering, was chiefly a rural industry. Every town in the state had at least one gristmill. The bolting monopoly enjoyed by New York City, the earliest flour center in the state, was broken when wheat from the great valleys of the Susquehanna, the Shenandoah and the James began to pour into Baltimore and Richmond. After 1800, however, the flour-milling supremacy returned to New York State, but this time Rochester, in the Genesee Valley, and not New York City, became the great milling center.

The first mill in western New York was probably erected on the site of what is now Rochester, in 1789, by a notorious character named "Indian" Allan. During the next quarter century, other mills were erected in the newlyrising towns and villages of the western part of the state. But the water power of the Genesee River and the building of the Genesee Valley Canal to the south and the Erie Canal to the west, thus tapping an important wheat area, gave Rochester preëminence. The War of 1812, with the need for flour for the troops on the Canadian frontier, stimulated milling in Rochester. Ely's famous Red Mill was built in 1814. Five additional mills were built between 1817 and 1821, one in 1826, 4 in 1827, and 7 between 1827 and 1835; by 1851 there were 22 mills with 100 run of stones capable of producing over 500,000 barrels of flour annually. So profitable was the business that, despite western competition, the Rochester millers could afford to import Canadian wheat on which a duty of 20 per cent was levied. New York City was the principal market for Rochester flour.

Rochester, however, was not the only milling center of the state. Oswego, with a situation which in many respects rivaled that of Rochester, imported grain from Canada and the West. In 1840, its mills had 42 run of stones, as compared with Rochester's 90. By 1859, Oswego's mills had a capacity of 9,000 barrels daily. Including the mills of the vicinity, it was claimed



that the city could produce 1,000,000 barrels annually. Much of its flour went to Canadian markets. Large shipments to Boston were also made after the opening of the Boston and Albany Railroad in 1842.

Albany and Troy were two other flour-milling towns. The lower end of the Mohawk Valley had long been famous for its wheat, which was manufactured into flour and then sent down the Hudson to New York City.

The wheat flour from Albany [reported the Swedish traveler, Kalm], is reckoned the best in all North America, except that from Sopus or Kingstown, a place between Albany and New York. . . . At New York they pay the Albany flour with several shillings more per hundredweight than from other places.

In both size and output, the Albany and Troy mills were distinctly smaller than those of Rochester or Oswego. The foundation for Buffalo's reputation as a milling center was laid during the decade of the fifties. Flour milling in New York City gained a new foothold when, in 1842, John Hecker built a small mill, which was the beginning of the Hecker-Jones-Jewell Company, one of the outstanding present-day milling concerns. In 1853, he built another and larger mill in the city. By 1860, there were 6 mills with a capital of \$272,800, turning out a product valued at \$2,612,500.

In the refining of sugar, the state was preëminent. The Friends of Domestic Industry reported, in 1831, that 11 of the 38 refineries of the country were located in New York City. By the close of the Civil War, the value of the products of the city's refining industry totaled \$35,000,000, exceeding in this respect all metropolitan manufactures. This tremendous expansion was made possible in part by new processes, especially the introduction of steam, by the firm of Robert and Alexander Stuart in 1832. Prior to this date, primitive methods had limited both

quality and quantity. Through the efforts of the Stuarts, cane sugar was made a utilizable table commodity. So rapidly did their business grow that it became necessary for them, in 1835, to replace their small frame building, at the corner of Greenwich and Chambers Streets, with a six-story brick factory having a capacity of 12,000 pounds a day. But consumption kept increasing, and in little more than a decade a nine-story building was added, making it possible to refine from 40,000,000 to 45,000,000 pounds annually. Until 1856, the Stuarts also engaged in an allied industry, the manufacture of confectionery. This had been the vocation of their father, Kimloch, who brought his knowledge of candy making from Edinburgh to New York in 1805.

Rivalling the Stuarts in their success in sugar refining was another prominent New York family, the Havemeyers. William Havemeyer, who learned his trade in England, emigrated to the United States in 1799 and shortly thereafter established a refinery in a small building on Van Dam Street. His business prospered with passing years, and he found himself able to send his son, William Frederick, to Columbia College, from which he was graduated in 1823. The youngster, after spending a brief period at the study of the law, discovered what seemed to him to be its insufficiencies and betook himself to his father's sugar house. In 1828, in partnership with his cousin, Frederick Christian Havemeyer, he set up an independent refinery. Fourteen years later, his fortune had assumed such proportions that he was able to sell out his share to his brother Albert and retire. It remained for Frederick's son, toward the end of the nineteenth century, to organize the Sugar Refineries Company, the famous "Sugar Trust."

The sugar-refining business should not be permitted to overshadow the production of maple sugar. Five counties of the state—Albany, Montgomery, Otsego, Tioga and Ontario—

competed with Vermont for the maple-sugar market. Indeed, as early as 1790, a sloop bearing forty hogsheads of maple sugar arrived in Philadelphia from Albany. This sugar had been produced on the property of Judge William Cooper, of Coopers-town, Otsego County.

All of the larger urban centers of the state had slaughtering establishments. By 1850, two of these, Buffalo and New York City, had outstripped the others. Meats that were not consumed fresh were salted, dried or smoked. Refrigeration and canning were still in the future, although shortly after the War of 1812 a start in canning was made by the immigrant Englishman, Ezra Daggett, and his son-in-law, Thomas Kensett. Daggett had worked with Peter Durand in England and brought the secret of hermetic sealing with him to New York. Setting up in business with the aid of Kensett, he commenced the canning of meats, gravies and soups in 1819. The firm's advertisements carried a warrant that the foods would "keep fresh for long periods, especially during protracted sea voyages." Customers were informed that spoiled tins could be detected by a bulging at the head of the "case," as the containers were then called. Daggett and Kensett for a time specialized in the preserving of oysters, lobsters, and salmon, but subsequently branched out to include many foods.

The distilling and brewery industries ranked high among the state's manufactures. Indeed, temperance movements found little sympathy with the producers of beer and spirituous liquors. In 1840, Albany, Troy, Hudson and New York City together produced nearly one-tenth of all the whisky, beer, ale and porter manufactured by the nation. In that year, the metropolitan distilleries alone accounted for nearly 3,000,000 gallons of liquor. At the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Albany had five extensive breweries; that of Fiddler and Taylor, reputed to be the largest in the United States, was

capable of manufacturing two hundred fifty barrels of beer a day. In New York City, the brewery business in 1840 ranked fifth industrially, being exceeded only by those of iron, distilling, glass and lumber.

Perhaps most prominent among the brewers of the state, during the period under consideration, were the Milbanks, Samuel, Sr., and Samuel, Jr. The father had been in business at 58 Madison Street before the War of 1812, and his son carried on until 1865, when he was succeeded by his three children. These three generations made Milbanks ale and porter, the standard which all competitors sought to attain.

Rum manufacture, so important in the colonial period, steadily declined. When, in 1828, the House Committee on Manufactures sought an explanation, Jeromus Johnson, a distillery operator of Hudson, ascribed the decrease to the inroads of whisky, which had supplanted rum as the hard drink of laborers and the bourgeoisie. Undoubtedly the passing of the old slave trade and the small financial return accounted in part for the declining market for the once-popular beverage. Notwithstanding these handicaps, distillers in New York, Hudson, Albany and intermediate points were, in the twenties, still able to find buyers for 350,000 gallons of rum per year.

Space forbids even a curtailed consideration of many of the state's other industrial enterprises. Mention, however, should be made of two in particular, namely, salt and glass. In 1795, the state purchased of the Onondaga Indians, for \$500 and the annual payment of 100 bushels of salt, Onondaga Lake with a strip of land one mile in width extending entirely around it, with exclusive right to all the salt springs. Instead of disposing of the springs in perpetuity, the state in 1797 entered into leasing agreements with those who desired to engage in salt manufacture. By this arrangement, the state fixed a maximum price for the salt and required all lessees to pay a duty

to the state of four cents per bushel. As a means of securing additional revenue for the building of the Erie Canal, the duty was raised to a York shilling a pound, but was subsequently reduced to one cent. So rich was the salt content in this territory that 45 gallons of brine would, in 1827, yield 56 pounds of salt. In that year, the New York salines, by solar evaporation, produced 1,104,542 bushels of salt, or one-fourth of the amount produced in the United States. Cayuga and Genesee Counties also yielded small quantities.

Glass of various kinds was manufactured in a number of localities. Between 1797, when the Hamilton Manufacturing Company, proprietor of extensive glass works ten miles west of Albany, was incorporated, and the taking of the state census of 1835, numerous companies for glass manufacture were chartered. Among these were the Rensselaer Glass Factory, the Madison and Woodstock Glass Manufacturing Associations, the Geneva Glass Company, the Manlius Glass and Iron Works, the Crown Glass Company of New York, and the Glass Globe Manufacturing Company of Albany. Stained glass of fine finish and design was being manufactured in the vicinity of New York City in the late twenties.

#### WORKERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS

Prior to 1825, practically all of the state's industrial establishments were small concerns competing with household manufactures. As elsewhere in America, they were shaped in large measure by environment, climate, available capital, character and accessibility of raw materials, means of transportation, labor and markets. In comparison with those of western Europe, they were crude and practical, rather than artistic. To make up for this shortcoming, some manufacturers resorted to the subterfuge of labeling their products as "imported" and selling

them to retailers as German, Parisian and Manchester creations. Fine prints made in Hudson, for example, were marketed in New York City as foreign fabrics. What artistic patterns we had for textile and other manufactures came almost entirely from abroad.

Most of the early mills were owned by individuals, families, partners, or joint-stock companies. The corporate form of control did not become general until after 1825. Shares in the joint-stock companies were usually in small denominations. After 1825, however, stock ownership tended to concentrate in the hands of a few, and there was a marked tendency for larger concerns to swallow up their lesser rivals. In addition to these amalgamations, numerous alliances existed not unlike the "gentleman's agreements" after the Civil War. The movement in this direction did not become very effective before 1850.

The rise of the factory system in America profoundly affected society. In New York this was strikingly evident. Simultaneously with the gradual shift of interest on the part of many from farm and wharf to mine and waterfall, there emerged two new social groups—manufacturing capitalists and factory laborers. Before the introduction of the machine, the state's manufacturing had been organized almost entirely on either a handicraft or a domestic basis. Small-scale production had been the rule. The artisan, whether master or journeyman, enjoyed almost complete economic independence. He was his own capitalist, the cost of his tools and buildings was small, he manufactured for a limited or local market, and in consequence his supply of raw materials and of finished products was measured by immediate needs. Moreover, no wide social gap existed between master owner and journeyman worker. Often working side by side, they knew and had mutual respect for each other; likewise their families usually mingled. A social gather-

ing at the worker's home, for example, would be attended by the master and his family.

Great was the change, however, by 1840. The older methods of production, still widespread in many communities, were being gradually, and in some industries rapidly, supplanted by the factory system. For the laborer, whether drawn from native stock or from the increasing stream of foreign immigrants, and whether young or old, this change meant in many cases hardship. In the mechanized industries, particularly the textiles, it meant long hours of narrow, blighting routine for a wage which ranged from one to six dollars a week. Except in rare instances, the laborer under the new state of affairs had no ownership in the plant or its equipment. Frequently the abode which sheltered him was owned by his employer. If by the use of modern industrial methods he sought to better his condition, he was liable under the transplanted English common law to arrest and punishment for conspiracy. Without capital reserve or extended credit, he was easily reduced to the margin of subsistence. His only asset was his labor and he sold this to an employer in order that he might buy food, clothing and shelter or help to "lift" a mortgage. He experienced few of the pleasures and privileges enjoyed by those for whom he worked. It was this condition that was in part responsible for the rise in the state, in the eighteen twenties, of a vigorous labor movement. By recourse to both economic and political action, the workers were able to secure better educational advantages for workers' children, a mechanics' lien law, abolition of imprisonment for debt, reform of the militia system, and in some industries better working conditions.

Far different was the lot of the industrialists. They, too, had their problems, but they were not usually of a bread-and-butter kind. Many of the early industrial establishments of the state were managed or supervised directly by their entrepreneur own-

ers. As plants expanded and as the owners acquired wealth, there was an increasing tendency on their part to retire from immediate supervision. Henceforth the owner's connection was represented by his investment, usually in the form of stocks and bonds. Often he had little or no knowledge of conditions in his plant. As a shareholder and a business man, he was primarily interested in dividends and profits. Of course there were many exceptions. Notable among these were Henry Burden, of the Troy Iron and Nail Company, and Judge Samuel Wilkinson, who laid the foundation of the iron business in Buffalo and was the principal organizer of the Buffalo Steam Engine Works.

In New York, as elsewhere in America, the industrialists came from all walks of life. Jacob Bell, the shipbuilder, dated his Connecticut ancestry back to one of the original settlers of 1641. Peter Cooper, who made millions out of glue, iron, telegraphy and railroads, could trace his American lineage to his great-great-grandfather, who settled in Fishkill in 1662. James Allaire's forebears were French Huguenots, who had settled in New Rochelle in 1680. Christian Bergh's ancestors had first taken up their residence in Rhinebeck, about 1700. Some of the industrialists had been craftsmen, thrifty farmers, small merchants, retired skippers or sons of skippers. Others were recent immigrants from Europe. Thus William Colgate, soap manufacturer, came from Kent, England, whence his father had fled in fear of arrest for support of the French Revolution. Robert Hoe, producer of printing presses, had been enabled to come to America only by the purchase of his apprenticeship to a Leicestershire joiner. From Scotland came the young apprentices, Henry Eckford, shipbuilder, and George Bruce, type founder. Innate ability, training, contacts and luck, rather than origin, counted most. Formal education played little part in the battle for financial success. Few had the advantages of academic training.



Not all those who turned to industrial pursuits succeeded. The records show that in every industrial community in the state, new concerns came into being only to continue for a year or two and then to disappear. On the other hand, what for the first half of the nineteenth century were great fortunes were amassed. Occasionally, a wealthy industrialist was philanthropically minded. The Stuart brothers, Robert Leighton and Alexander, for example, became systematic patrons of education, religion, and the healing art, devoting a definite minimum of their income to these causes. Their largest donations included \$1,000,000 to Princeton College, and \$55,000 to the Presbyterian Hospital of New York City. William Colgate set aside from 10 to 30 per cent of his yearly income for what he considered worthy projects. Thus the Colgate millions helped to enlarge and transform Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary into Madison University (Colgate University since 1890); aided in the organization successively of the New York Bible Society and the American and Foreign Bible Society; and finally provided a foundation for the Broadway Tabernacle. George Bruce, the immigrant type founder, employed his wealth in the encouragement and training of mechanics and printers. The Mechanics Institute, the New York Type-Founders Association, the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, the New York Typographical Society, the Apprentices Library, the Printers Library, the New York Historical Society, the Saint Andrews Society, all benefited through his liberality.

Although a minority, these pushing captains of industry, like their English compeers, challenged the political leadership and social prestige of the commercial and landed aristocracy. It was a challenge by the "new rich" to the "old rich." The latter, patrician in attitude, based their exclusiveness on family fortune dating back at least to the beginning of the eighteenth century. They had cordially welcomed to their ranks those leaders who had fought valiantly for the independence of the United States.

With some exceptions, they frowned upon the aspirations of the "new rich" to social equality. Gradually, however, the bars were let down, and the Havemeyers, the Stuarts, the Colgates, the Allaires, and the Hoes mingled in the drawing-rooms with the Livingstons, the Schuylers, the Fishes, the Van Cortlandts and the Stuyvesants.

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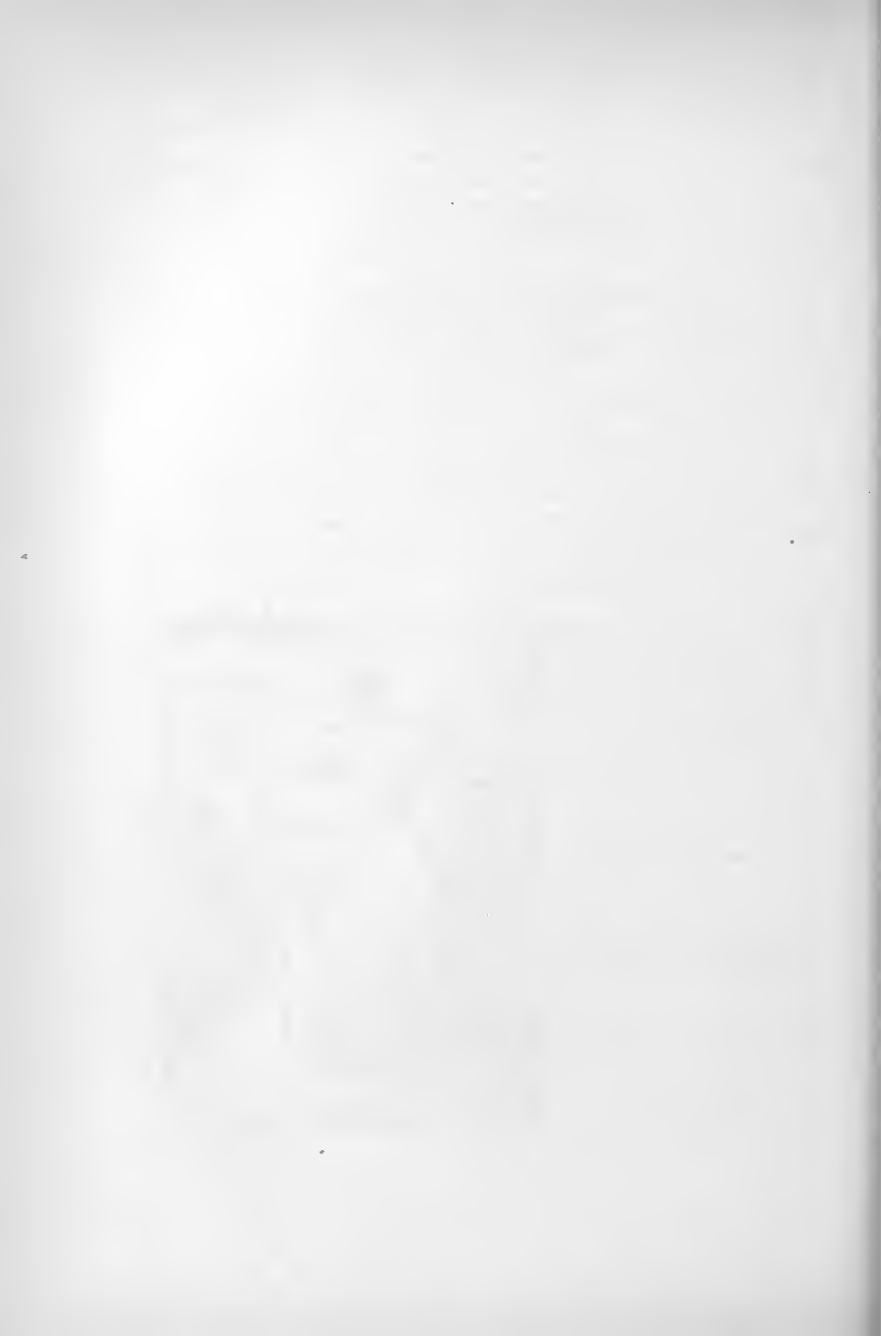
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— VIII —

REFORM MOVEMENTS

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## REFORM MOVEMENTS

### EARLY EFFORTS TO MITIGATE SLAVERY

NINETEENTH-CENTURY America witnessed the growth and development of a renaissance in humanitarian activities. In the main, this was due to a deep-seated reaction on the part of many against the narrowing and limiting ideas and forces of the previous age. Calvinism slowly retreated before the insistent attacks of the English rationalists. Fierce and exacting humanistic inquiries by the liberals, who had adopted French ideas, silenced those who had accepted the teachings of Jonathan Edwards. The silent but effective appeal of the Friends, and the tolerant influence of frontier life, helped to usher in a new order that was replete with assurances for the future. Although much of this centered in New England, considerable agitation and progress took place in New York, particularly as its cosmopolitan life and far-flung empire offered an easy channel for the spread of these reforming movements. Nor should one be unmindful of the fact that many a New Yorker who embraced these various causes was possessed of considerable property.

Among the numerous reforms that attracted attention in New York, none gathered greater strength during the period covered by this chapter than that which concerned the institution of slavery. Doubtless the religious attitude of the Friends, who viewed slavery as an evil, had much to do with the inception of this movement. Then again, the American Revolution, with all of its emphasis upon the rights of man, must have given a strong and wholesome stimulus. In any event, religious and social forces of much strength most certainly paved the way for what was to follow. Definite progress was registered in the spring of 1785, when the state legislature passed a measure pro-

hibiting the future sale of slaves within New York. Three years later, this act was amended so as to prevent the import of slaves for sale. Neither of these laws concerned themselves with the status of slaves already within the state. The legality of holding persons in bondage was clearly recognized, by both state and national law. Opportunity did exist, however, for the manumission of all such persons, a practice that the Friends had followed for a long time. Others not of that faith also urged the freeing of slaves in this manner. The defect in this procedure, namely that it would take a number of years to bring about the extinction of slavery, was apparent to all. To overcome this difficulty became the object of a number of liberals throughout the state. Consequently, there was formed in New York City, in 1785, a state abolition society with John Jay as its president and Alexander Hamilton as secretary. This organization gained the aid and approval of many. Its funds, though limited, permitted the publication and distribution of antislavery tracts, which found their way into the homes of prominent citizens and public officials. Further, this society sponsored petitions to the state legislature calling for the gradual abolition of slavery. This latter point is significant, as it reflects the ideas of no radical group, but rather of a more conservative element that was most jealous of property rights. It did not seek the compulsory emancipation of a single slave. Rather did these reformers desire to free the future children of slaves, who in 1790 numbered 21,324 in the state. Agitation along these lines continued for more than a decade. Ultimately, however, in 1799, an act was passed which provided that all females born after July 4, 1799, were to be free on reaching the age of twenty-five; while all males became free at twenty-eight.

Definite advance had been made by the friends of the colored man. This very growth, moreover, argued for increased efforts, with the result that in 1808, when the number of slaves had been

reduced to 15,000, a state manumission society was incorporated for the express purpose of speeding the elimination of slavery within New York. It is evident that this body took itself seriously and was able to accomplish some good, as its life was extended in 1824 for a number of years, and then again in 1844. In the meantime, the principal features of the law of 1799 were renewed, while the importation of all slaves was forbidden after May, 1810, subject to certain minor exceptions; a law of 1817 provided for general abolition within the state in 1827. These various laws had done much toward limiting the scope and evils of slavery. Supplementing these influences were the activities of a number of societies that were interested in different phases of the colored man's life. The New York African Society for Mutual Relief, the Brooklyn African Woolman Benefit Society, the Albany School of Colored People, and the Schenectady African School Society are typical examples of these organizations. Property rights in slaves, brought into the state by travellers or by temporary residents, continued to be respected within New York until 1841, when all privileges of slave owners, and all ownership in slaves, ceased.

Laudable as these efforts were, there still existed in the state many who viewed the entire problem of slavery from a different angle. In brief, these individuals recognized that slavery was a national as well as a state affair, and that the institution had far-reaching social and economic implications, to say nothing of its political possibilities. New York might do ever so much, even to the extent of abolishing slavery within its boundaries, but until the problem had been met along national lines no satisfactory solution was possible. Opinion of this kind existed in other states, and many different suggestions were made in the hope of finding some idea that would receive nation-wide approval. One of these, which secured rather general indorsement among those opposed to slavery, was the so-called colonization

movement. Those who advanced this idea intended to further the transportation of freed slaves from America to Africa. Continued thought along this line at last bore fruit in the formation, in 1816, of the American Colonization Society. The headquarters of this group was located at Washington. Branch organizations were planted in all parts of the country; one being located in New York City as early as 1818. Among reformers, the reception accorded this endeavor was highly favorable, and must have greatly pleased its founders. Local auxiliaries were established at Albany, Troy, Geneva, Buffalo, Waterford and Brooklyn. A number of county organizations were also started. Foremost among those who supported colonization were Arthur Tappan, of New York City, and Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro. Both of these men joined the state society early in the 1820s, and gave most liberally of their time and money for the extension of its ideals and purposes. A study of the Gerrit Smith papers reveals how interested this prominent philanthropist became in the cause of the slave. Others who assisted in furthering colonization were Anson G. Phelps, Hugh Maxwell, Loring D. Dewey, Col. Henry Rutgers, Benjamin F. Butler, Dr. Alexander Proudfit and President Duer of Columbia College. For the next ten or twelve years, interest in colonization grew by leaps and bounds. New York was always well represented at the national meetings of this society, and played a rather active rôle in its activities. Within the state, considerable effort was made to enlist the support of all liberal-minded persons. Petitions, moreover, concerning the aims of the society were presented at Albany. Public interest reached its height in the passage by the state legislature, in 1832, of a resolution which applauded the motives and objects of the American Colonization Society, and commended it to all citizens of the state. Considerable publicity was given to this resolution by the friends of colonization.

By this time, definite signs of internal dissension had arisen within the national organization. Some of its members seem to have challenged the administration and motive of those in control. At first it was only whispered, but in time it was quite loudly proclaimed, that the national officers had pursued a policy that was anti-Christian. The Negroes themselves roundly condemned it as a southern scheme to get rid of freedmen, so that slavery could flourish undisturbed by their example. John B. Russwurm, whose Bowdoin College degree made him the first college graduate of his race and who edited the *Freedom's Journal* in New York City shortly after 1830, was reviled and ostracized by other men of color because, it was alleged, he had "sold out" to the colonizationists. Arthur Tappan was one of those who led this revolt against the general policy of the society. He declared that numbers of colored people were being sent out of this country without any reference to their moral fitness. And yet these undesirables were to undertake the difficult rôle of civilizing Africa. Further, Tappan expressed great concern over the practice employed of shipping on board vessels bound for Liberia not merely former slaves but rum, arms and ammunition. In doing this, Tappan declared, those responsible were committing an immoral act and violating the aims of the society. At first this prominent reformer and merchant of New York City sought to check these tendencies, but, meeting with no great success, ultimately severed his connections with the society. In a letter to his friend, Horace Greeley, Tappan stated that "The Colonization Society is a device of Satan and owes its existence to the single motive to perpetuate slavery." Gerrit Smith also withdrew from the society in 1835, when that body refused to embrace the more radical doctrine of abolition.

In spite of these and other withdrawals, which seriously crippled the finances of the organization, the national society continued to function, though it was subjected to a constant

flow of criticism both within and without its membership. Many of the complaints had their inception in the various state and local auxiliaries, of which none was more extreme than that of New York. Here the state society privately and publicly found fault with the parent organization. For a time it looked as though New York intended to capture the machinery of the national body and place itself in control. To gain this end, a far-reaching reorganization of the existing society was judged necessary. And any sweeping changes, such as the New York group sponsored, were bound to gain the ill will of the southern states and the local branches. In other words, the society would become a sectional, rather than a national, affair. Many members, both northern and southern, questioned the expediency of the New York proposals, and threw their influence against what they thought would mean a disruption of the entire society. Consequently, the aims of the New York auxiliary were defeated, a result that tended to alienate many within this state. In time, however, the central office was able to overcome this defection, and to bring the New York branch back into the general colonization movement. By now, however, colonization had lost its hold upon the American people, though both national and state societies continued to receive support in New York after the year 1850.

#### ABOLITION AND STATE POLITICS

Internal strife and discord represent only one factor in the decline of the American Colonization Society. By itself, this disturbing influence would not have checked further growth, had the ideals of the organization been vital enough to command the attention and respect of the liberal element. Colonization, with all its merits, was still only a compromise. Once it was granted that slavery was altogether evil, it became most evi-

dent that colonization was an ineffective way of solving the problem. Left to itself and given a long time to operate, it might ultimately have won success. But, in the meantime, thousands of God's children would be born into slavery. Consequently those who reasoned in this manner demanded a speedier and more intelligent way out of the dilemma. Most of those who were asking for more drastic measures centered their hopes upon nothing short of total abolition. In directing this shifting sentiment, no one was more responsible than William Lloyd Garrison. Indeed it was largely as a result of this man's writings and teachings that Tappan and Smith had deserted the colonization society. Tappan, it appears, had become a most devoted reader of Garrison's *Liberator*, in which abolition was praised and colonization condemned. Having accepted the tenets of abolition, Tappan sought to further the cause by establishing at New York, in March, 1833, the *Emancipator*, under the editorship of Rev. Charles Dennison. Friends of this paper multiplied rapidly throughout New York and neighboring states. Considerable support was secured in the metropolitan area, and in time talk arose over the wisdom of forming a local antislavery society. A self-appointed committee, of which Joshua Leavitt was chairman, finally issued a call for a meeting of the friends of abolition in New York City. Some difficulty was met in the matter of obtaining a place for this gathering. Ultimately, permission was secured to hold the meeting at the Chatham Street Chapel, where, early in October of the same year, there was founded the New York City Abolition Society. Subsequent issues of certain papers, plus publications of the organization, set forth quite clearly the aims and objectives of this society. Over fifty persons signed the constitution of this body, of which Arthur Tappan, Charles Dennison, Joshua Leavitt, Isaac T. Hopper, Abraham L. Cox, Lewis Tappan and William Goodell were officers.

Similar agitation and organization in other parts of the country argued strongly for national action. As a result, a general convention of abolitionists gathered at Philadelphia in December, 1833. Here a constitution and a declaration of sentiments were adopted, and the American Anti-Slavery Society came into being. In achieving this end, the friends of the slave in New York played a very important rôle. This fact is evidenced by the central organization of the society. Arthur Tappan and Elizur Wright were elected president and corresponding secretary, while Abraham L. Cox, William Greene, William Goodell and Beriah Green were important members. New York City, moreover, became the seat of the executive committee, and the *Emancipator*, with Goodell as editor, was voted to be the official publication of the society. Annual meetings were frequently held at New York City, not, however, unattended by stiff opposition on the part of those who denounced the abolitionists as dangerous radicals. Most prominent in this respect were the disturbances of May, 1834, at which time the home of Lewis Tappan was sacked and partly destroyed by a disgraceful crowd of rioters.

Persecution only strengthened the determination of the local group, and added many to their membership rolls. Antislavery sentiment spread rapidly in all parts of the state. Much of this centered in Madison, Onondaga and Oneida Counties, where a demand arose for the founding of a state organization. Alvan Stuart, president of the local abolition group at Utica, led this movement and invited all those interested to gather at that town for the purpose of establishing a state society. Some six hundred persons met at Utica on October 21, 1835. A determined opposition, however, prevented these delegates from convening as planned at the courthouse. Accordingly, those present gathered at the Second Presbyterian Church, but even here the rioters appeared and succeeded in breaking up the



meeting. At this point, the cause of abolition received most valuable aid by the timely suggestion of Gerrit Smith that the convention meet forthwith at Peterboro, a few miles away. This invitation was accepted, and at Peterboro was founded the New York State Anti-Slavery Society. Among those who were most prominent in the events of these October days were Alvan Stuart, Gerrit Smith, Lewis Tappan, Judge Brewster of Genesee County, Rev. M. Wetmore of Utica, and Rev. Samuel J. May, later of Syracuse. Annual meetings of this body were held at Rochester, Syracuse and other cities, while the cause of abolition received considerable publicity both in the press and in the pulpit. At Rochester, Myron Holley aided by founding the *Freeman* in 1839, while at Cazenovia there appeared a paper known as the *Cazenovia Abolitionist*. Holley's interest in the movement was vital, especially as he pointed the way toward political action, for which he is frequently quoted as having been the founder of the Liberty party. His death, in 1841, was a distinct loss to the antislavery group, though his activities were carried on by the splendid work of Frederick Douglass, who came to Rochester in 1847. Douglass became the editor of the *North Star*, which paper was largely devoted to the cause of antislavery.

Interest in abolition continued to grow, and that in spite of the ridicule that was poured upon its advocates. Not all of this opposition sprang from mere difference of opinion in respect to slavery. In some cases, it arose as a result of certain views which were not altogether vital to the success of abolition. Foremost was the question of political action. Some of the more radical members argued that a true abolitionist would have nothing to do with a government that continued to recognize the institution of slavery. It was their belief that the society should formally declare itself opposed to the formation of a political party to gain their ends. In other words, nonpolitical action was the

procedure urged by these more radical members. Many of these also had taken high ground on the disputed question of woman's rights, and sought to drag that into the sessions of the society. These topics will be considered separately. It is enough to point out here that, in general, the older and more conservative members were opposed to these views, at least to the extent of allowing them to become a part of the program of abolition. By 1840, it was evident that some sort of decision would have to be made. Either the national antislavery society would embrace these ideas, or else the organization would split in two. Considerable thought was given to the matter, and many attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the two groups. At the annual meeting of 1840, the issue was squarely met with the result that the more conservative members severed their connection with the parent organization. In order to continue what they deemed to be the essential aims of abolition, these men then founded the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Among those who were responsible for the establishment of the new organization were many prominent New Yorkers, notably, the Tappan brothers, Charles A. Dennison, Joshua Leavitt and Gerrit Smith. Indeed New York was largely captured by these men for their society, although William Lloyd Garrison, Henry C. Wright and others did not cease to advocate their views with some success within the state.

At the time of this disruption, antislavery agitation had risen to great heights throughout the nation. Admitting slavery to be an evil, considerable efforts had been made toward educating the public along the lines of abolition. No one can read the contemporary literature of that age and escape the conviction that the problem had been brought out into the open. In general, most thinking people knew enough, and felt deeply enough, to take sides on the question. Mere knowledge, while valuable in itself, was not sufficient. Ideas must be backed up by action,

and for that reason certain of the friends of the slave argued that the issue should be brought into the field of American politics. Indeed, abolition had already become an issue, as is evidenced in New York by Van Buren's opposition, in 1835, to these so-called radical views. Governor Marcy in 1836 and again in 1837 took occasion to call the attention of the legislature to the dangers of these doctrines. During the elections of 1838, the Whigs in New York were more than startled by the attitude of the abolitionists. Gerrit Smith, whose "conversion to abolitionism," one author states, "helped the Anti-Slavery cause much as the conversion of St. Paul benefited the Christian Church," declared that he and others of like mind would not support Seward, unless he gave them definite pledges in respect to slavery. Seward refused to do this, though his managers were more than worried until the November elections revealed how few abolitionists there were in the state.

The governor of Virginia in July, 1839, asked Governor Seward to deliver three fugitives charged with having stolen a Negro in that state. Seward refused the request, because it had no constitutional authority. This decision by Seward was protested by the Virginia legislature, which threatened to resort to "the law of self preservation." Seward charged Virginia with "a menace of secession from the Union," and sent the correspondence to the New York legislature, which on May 14, 1840, upheld his position. Virginia, later followed by South Carolina, then retaliated, in 1841, with a law to embarrass New York's commerce, but Seward refused to "renounce the principle that all men are born free and equal." On April 9, 1842, Seward urged New York citizens to resist legally all attempts by Virginia and South Carolina to molest them. The New York legislature, however, in 1842 passed a concurrent resolution asserting that stealing a slave in Virginia was a crime under the Federal Constitution (Art. IV, Sec. 2). In commenting on the

action of the legislature, Seward expressed his disapproval of it and contended that slaves were men and not chattels, and hence were not subject to theft; and he refused to transmit the resolve to the two southern states.

A related case was presented, in 1841, by the governor of Georgia, who made a requisition on Governor Seward to surrender a fugitive charged with stealing a Negro woman slave and some personal property. Seward refused the request, as in the Virginia case. Governor William C. Bouck, in his annual message of 1843, turned his back on Seward's position about extradition, and expressed a willingness to deliver up the fugitives to Virginia and Georgia.

Failing to capture the machinery of the Whig party, the anti-slavery leaders determined to launch a party of their own. This was effected at Warsaw, New York, in December, 1838, when James G. Birney was nominated as candidate for president by the Liberty party. Later, in the year 1840, this body nominated Gerrit Smith for governor. When the votes were counted, however, neither Birney nor Smith got even three thousand votes in the state; but the movement was gaining force and Alvan Stuart, in 1842, received a little more than seven thousand votes in the contest for the governorship. Two years later, Birney ran again for president, this time gaining throughout the country 62,300 votes, of which 15,000 came from New York. During the next few years, slavery continued to be an issue in each campaign, though at no time during the period covered by this chapter did its friends gain any victory within the state of New York.

Antislavery sentiment was also expressed in the debates and acts of the New York State legislature, from 1840 to 1850. In 1840, a measure was passed which provided for more effectual protection against the kidnaping, or reducing to slavery, of free citizens of the state. And in the same year, a joint resolution



HORACE GREELEY



GERRIT SMITH

TWO NOTABLE REFORMERS



declared against the policy adopted by the national House of Representatives in respect to slavery petitions. Regret, moreover, was expressed at Albany over the fact that certain New York representatives at Washington had voted in favor of denying the right of petition. Again, when the United States went to war with Mexico in 1846, the state legislature resolved that slavery should not be allowed to exist in any territory that might be acquired as a result of that war. And when in January, 1848, it was made known that Mexico had ceded to America extensive areas, this legislature again voiced its opposition to the further extension of slavery.

#### THE RISE OF THE PEACE MOVEMENT

The American Anti-Slavery Society, it will be recalled, had been split wide open over the question of political or nonpolitical action. By nonpolitical action was meant the refusal on the part of some to seek through the ballot a solution of the slavery issue. The more radical members, who followed this idea, argued that it was wrong for a Christian to participate in any election under a government that recognized the institution of slavery. The genesis of this attitude is not, however, to be found in slavery. Rather did it have its inception in the growth and development of the peace idea, which had appeared in New York and elsewhere early in the colonial era. The activities of the Friends, who existed in some numbers on Long Island, in New York City and in Dutchess County, did much to spread the tenets of their faith. Their testimony against war is evidenced by their conduct during the Revolution, reflected in their records preserved in New York City. A study of the contemporary literature of New York, during the eighteenth century, leads to the same general conclusion. The writings of Penn, Benezet, Franklin and sundry others which reflected an antiwar

bias, appear to have been read in New York. The New York Friends were very active in spreading the ideas of these writers, as well as Mott's *Lawfulness of War*, Wells' *Essay on War*, and Heaton's *War and Christianity Contrasted*.

Non-Quaker interest in New York, in respect to the evils of war, may be said to have started with the work of David Low Dodge, a prominent merchant and importer of Hartford and New York City. Early in 1809, he set forth his views on this subject in a tract entitled *The Mediator's Kingdom, Not of This World*. Although a thousand copies were printed, the supply was soon exhausted. The author's reputation grew, and in a short time there were meetings and conversations about more publications, and, by 1812, about the foundation of a peace society. Other tracts had been issued in the meantime by Dodge, but the advent of the War of 1812 checked all further effort for the time being. After this contest had been ended, Dodge revived the interest of his friends, with the result that in August, 1815, there was formed the New York Peace Society. Dodge himself was almost a pure nonresister, though he did admit the right of personal self-defense. War, according to him, was waged to defend honor, which was nothing more than an "empty bubble," a standard of "right and wrong without form or dimension." The New York Peace Society, however, elected to follow a more catholic position. It threw its doors open quite generally to all who were willing to "discourage war and promote peace." Within a few years, the society numbered some seventy members, of whom the more important were Anson G. Phelps, Walter Phelps, P. W. Gallaudet, Eleazar Lord and Herman Averill. All of these men were prominent in New York humanitarian circles.

Annual meetings appear to have been held for most of the years from 1815 to 1828, during which time a number of tracts were published and distributed, and contacts established with



kindred societies in other parts of the country. An examination of the *New York Observer*, the *Journal of Commerce* and the *New York Evening Post* reveals that publicity was given to the society and that, in the main, these papers were not entirely unfriendly. Interest outside of New York City is evidenced by the founding of peace societies at Cayuga, Albany, Andover, Schenectady and Ballston Spa. At this last-named town, one Matthew Simpson gave generously of his time and money to spread the gospel of peace in Saratoga, Washington and Montgomery Counties. Each of these local efforts was but a reflection of the growing peace sentiment that had appeared throughout the East, notably in New England. Here a number of organizations had been founded, largely as a result of the energies of Noah Worcester, who, in 1815, led the movement, which at once gained many converts. State societies had been formed which led in time to a demand for a national organization. Thanks to the tireless energy of William Ladd, who by 1826 had become the foremost peace advocate in the country, such a society was finally established at New York, on May 8, 1828. The president of this new group, which was known as the American Peace Society and which is still in existence, was David Low Dodge.

From 1828 to 1836, the headquarters of this organization was in New York City, after which it was moved to Hartford and from there to Boston, where it remained for some time after the Civil War. While at New York, annual meetings were held during that great outpouring of religious and humanitarian feeling which occurred each year in May. This event was known as "Anniversary Week," at which time all of the various philanthropic and reforming groups held their meetings. The sessions of the Peace Society seldom lasted for more than a day, and were usually held at one of the local churches such as the Chatham Street Chapel. With the removal of the headquar-

ters from New York, interest within the state in the peace movement declined to some extent. One of the most notable converts to the cause of peace during these years was Gerrit Smith, who became vice president of the American Peace Society, an office which he held to the time of his death in 1874.

Prior to 1837, the American Peace Society had adhered to a very conservative policy. War, and by that was meant international war, was officially frowned upon, but only offensive warfare was condemned. The right and duty of a nation to take up arms in self-defense was admitted. Individual members of the society might hold whatever views they wished, even to the extent of denying the right of personal self-defense. By 1837, however, those sponsoring more radical concepts became sufficient in numbers to put through a change of policy. Thenceforth all international contests, offensive and defensive, were condemned. While this was a distinct concession to the more liberal following, it failed to satisfy those who wanted nothing short of complete national and personal nonresistance. This more radical group included a number who accepted the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison, Henry C. Wright and Adin Ballou, who in 1838 founded the New England Non-Resistance Society.

Public opinion in general seems to have been hostile to this new organization. The *New York Observer*, in reporting the events incident to the founding of this society, called them "Religious Jacobinism Run Mad," while a local New York City peace society passed resolutions condemning nonresistance. On the other hand, some sympathy was expressed in New York, chiefly in certain upstate towns like Utica, Peterboro and Syracuse. To these and other places had come Henry C. Wright, who was able to convince a number of people of the merits of a "non-killing" philosophy. Wright visited Peterboro and spent several days attempting to convince Gerrit Smith that it was his Chris-

tian duty to join the Non-Resistance Society. Although Smith was most kindly disposed and generously supplied the Boston office with pecuniary aid, he never could convince himself that he should become a member. The failure on the part of Wright and others to enlist the moral support of Smith was duplicated in a number of other cases, and, after several years of uncertainty, the New England Non-Resistance Society underwent a rapid decline. By 1846, the organization had spent its force. Doubtless the growing interest in slavery sapped much of the strength of this society, particularly as many of its members were numbered among the most bitter opponents of slavery. Again, their denial of the right to participate in any election conducted by a government that recognized the use of force must have alienated many who otherwise might have supported the movement. Finally, one should note that the American Peace Society offered what might be termed a more conservative and respectable method of ending war.

Indeed, within New York, this society continued to spread its ideas, and gained the support and good will of a number of prominent persons. Much of this was due to the tireless energy of William Ladd, who in the fall of 1840 undertook an extensive speaking tour in upstate New York. Citizens of Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Auburn, Rochester, Lockport, Niagara Falls and Buffalo listened to this man, who thoroughly condemned the entire war system. In lieu of international conflict as a means of settling disputes between nations, he advocated the establishment of an international tribunal and a world congress of nations. Various local branches of the national peace society were founded, and at times a state organization functioned to some extent. James O. Pond and Origen Bachelier seem to have been the prime movers in New York City. These and other friends of the movement sponsored the sending of petitions to Congress, advocating a league of nations and a world

court. Stipulated arbitration was also brought to the attention of Congress. This later concept, although long a plank in the program of the peace advocates, became its chief objective after 1842, largely because of the views advanced by one of its members, William Jay, in his celebrated tract entitled *War and Peace*.

The hopes and aims of the peace enthusiasts received a sharp rebuff as the United States drifted into a war with Mexico. A number of antiwar meetings were held during the winter of 1845-46, while Congress received many petitions protesting against the possibility of war. After the outbreak of hostilities in the spring of 1846, it became the patriotic duty of all citizens to support the government. Accordingly a number of the former members of the peace societies, in New York and elsewhere, swung over to a war basis. Here and there, loyal peace men voiced their opposition. Most notable in this respect was the effort put forward by the antiwar group in Syracuse. Part of this opposition was due to the influence of the abolitionists, who saw in this contest a desire on the part of the South to extend the limits of slavery. Others, however, denounced the war on the ground that all war was an evil. Foremost among those who held to these views was Rev. Samuel J. May, pastor of the Syracuse Unitarian Church. May was a member of the national peace society, a close friend of Gerrit Smith, and at one time had coöperated with Garrison in founding the New England Non-Resistance Society, but, for undiscovered reasons, May never fully accepted the tenets of this organization. At Syracuse, it would appear, he made the Unitarian Church a center for all of the reforming movements, especially those that concerned war and slavery. When news of the outbreak of the Mexican War reached Syracuse, May voiced his opposition, and persuaded a number of his friends to hold an antiwar meeting at the Empire Hotel. A group of war advocates, however, also appeared and were able so to control matters that May and his

friends were forced to retire to the Congregational Church. Even here, within a temple dedicated to the Prince of Peace, a riot was staged and the peace group was compelled to halt its activities. Actually, nothing was accomplished by those opposed to the war, as militaristic public opinion at Syracuse and elsewhere completely dominated matters. Peace ideals, however, had been sown throughout the state and, though the movement was checked by the Mexican War, it made continued progress after that contest was ended.

### THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE QUESTION

Samuel J. May's interest in humanitarian activities knew no bounds. In many respects he and Gerrit Smith represented up-state New York in every important social reform advocated during the first half of the nineteenth century. Both of these men were most devoted to the cause of woman suffrage, and the generous support furnished by Gerrit Smith, who was a near relative of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, has never been forgotten by the women of the state. May's assistance was evidenced by his sermons and addresses, in one of which he declared that women could not expect "to have their wrongs fully redressed until they themselves have a voice and a hand in the enactment and administration of the laws." Sentiment of this type was expressed elsewhere and, as early as 1836, the legislature of the state was petitioned to remove certain common law disabilities against women and to give them equal property rights. For the next twelve years, a number of such memorials were introduced to grant women these rights. None of these gained much consideration until after the general constitutional convention of 1846, at which time sober thinkers gave more attention to the position of women than they had previously done. As a result of this quickening of thought and interest, the New York State

legislature in 1848, under the leadership of John Fine, passed a law which greatly encouraged those who had advocated woman's rights. According to this measure, the property of a married woman was protected against any and all claims of her husband. Nor could he assume any control over the same or use it to meet any debts or obligations that he had contracted. In passing this law, New York became the first state to recognize equal rights of married women in property.

In the meantime, those interested in the cause of woman suffrage had been busy. The passage of Judge Fine's law encouraged them to hope that better days were in store. Accordingly, a number of central New York women gathered at Seneca Falls, July 14, 1848, and discussed the entire problem. It was their opinion that the time was ripe for a state convention. Seneca Falls was agreed upon as the place of this meeting, which was set for the nineteenth and twentieth of the same month. This call was sent out over the signatures of Martha C. Wright, Mary A. McClintock and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. A number of men and women indicated their interest by attending the meeting, which was held at the Wesleyan Church. At this gathering, several able addresses were delivered, which encouraged those present to adopt, in imitation of the Declaration of Independence, a statement setting forth the various limitations that had been imposed upon women in the past. A series of resolutions were also passed providing for equal rights for women in universities, trades and professions; the exercise of suffrage; equality in marriage, personal freedom, and hours of work and wages; the legal right to make contracts; the privilege of sharing in all political honors, offices and emoluments; the right to sue and be sued; and the freedom of testifying in all courts of justice. In general, public opinion, as expressed by the press and the pulpit, was not favorable to these ideas and to those who had sponsored the same. Undaunted, however, by these attacks, its advocates held

another meeting at Rochester, early in August of the same year. Similar resolutions were passed, and some ground was gained for further growth and expansion. Most of this development took place after 1850, and is treated elsewhere in this work.

Present as a spectator at the Seneca Falls meeting, in 1848, was Amelia Jenks Bloomer, who in 1849 started the *Lily*, possibly the first journal published by a woman. For six years, it urged reforms in education, marriage laws and woman's suffrage. Mrs. Stanton contributed under the name of "Sunflower." The subscribers numbered more than 4,000 in 1853. Although ardent in temperance and suffrage reform, Mrs. Bloomer's name is associated with dress reform. Wearing an ordinary bodice, short skirt and full trousers, ridiculed by the press as "bloomers," she drew large crowds to her lectures in 1853, in company with Susan B. Anthony and Rev. Antoinette L. Brown. It was said that Horace Greeley went to hear her, and her address was reported favorably in the *Tribune*. Although Mrs. Bloomer removed from New York to Iowa, her dress reform was adopted by not a few women, among the first being the daughter of Gerrit Smith.

### TEMPERANCE REFORM

Among the various topics that interested the advocates of woman's rights was the question of temperance. Individual opposition to the evils of drinking existed long before any organized effort demonstrated itself. The Methodists and the Society of Friends for some time had "viewed them as contraband articles to the pure laws of the Gospel," but it remained for Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia to arouse people to the need for action in his celebrated tract *Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Body and Mind*. This article appears to have been widely read throughout the country, and

it did much to stimulate further thought and led, in time, to action. The earliest known temperance society was that founded at Moreau, New York, on April 20, 1808, under the guidance of Dr. B. J. Clark. Each one who signed the constitution of this organization pledged himself to refrain from the use of ardent spirits and wine, except for reasons of health, religion and social contacts. By the latter was meant that the drinking of wine at public dinners was permissible. Those who violated these pledges were subject to a 25-cent fine, while a tax of 50 cents was levied for actual intoxication.

Similar interest appeared about the same time in New England, which resulted in the formation, in 1813, of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance. This body, as well as that at Moreau, sought to improve matters by preaching the evils of drinking and the merits of moderation. And while these efforts were valuable in themselves and commanded the respect of many, there were others who felt that no lasting result could be expected until absolute abstinence was practiced. A gesture in this direction was made in the founding of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance at Boston, in 1826. Branches of this organization were planted in New York, but neither the parent nor its offspring dared to come out openly in favor of total abstinence, even though its members accepted this concept in principle. Definite expression of this more radical idea appeared in the constitutions of several temperance societies in New York between 1826 and 1830. Most important in this respect were the efforts of the group at Hector, New York, which had been formed as early as 1818, and which, in 1826, elected to allow its members to accept one of two pledges. One of these called for abstinence from distilled spirits; the other, for complete abstinence. In recording the attitude of the members, the secretary of the society placed a "T" before the name of each one who signed the more extreme pledge.



And for this reason, so tradition has it, those who were so marked became known as "T-Totalers." Other societies in time adopted this more extreme position.

The expansion of this concept, however, was of mixed benefit. Prior to the appearance of T-Totalism, the cause of temperance had gained a number of converts. In 1829, there were over seventy-eight societies in the state, and by 1833 over a quarter of a million people were enrolled as members. Albany alone had, in 1832, fourteen societies, with an enrollment of 4,164 members. The effect of this widespread enthusiasm for temperance, according to Doctor Krout, was seen in the closing down of many distilleries and in the refusal of many tavern keepers to sell intoxicating drinks. Moderation, as argued for by most of the local advocates, was quite a different thing from that insisted upon by the followers of the Hector plan. Total abstinence was the accepted view of E. C. Delevan, Benjamin Joy, and others who were high in the counsels of the state society which had been formed in 1829. These men advanced this position at the state convention which was held at Utica in 1833; they were able to gain the passing of a resolution commending total abstinence, but not requiring it as a qualification for membership. The following year, a stronger resolution was passed, and in 1835 the *Temperance Recorder*, the official publication of the state society, came out with the statement that its columns would in the future advocate entire abstinence "from all that can intoxicate." Later in the same year, at a convention held at Buffalo, complete indorsement of this position was voted by those present.

The effect of this more radical stand was to alienate the support of many throughout the state, so much so that the various societies within the state reported only a little over 130,000 members by 1839. Most of these, moreover, formed a solid block in the southern tier of counties. This relative drop in numbers

did not check the spread of the idea of total abstinence. The idea was discussed generally throughout the state and nation, and became an important topic of debate at the national convention in 1833. Furthermore, at the convention held at Saratoga Springs on August 4, 1836, the national society accepted the principle of total abstinence, and from that time on it became the basic concept of the temperance leaders.

Similar views were advanced by other societies, notably the Washington Temperance Society, which had been founded at the national capital in 1840. Branches of this organization were formed in a number of places throughout New York, and gained the support of many people. Female groups, known as Martha Washington Societies, were also founded, but by 1843 interest in this organization waned. Its place was taken by the Order of the Sons of Temperance, which had been founded at New York City on September 29, 1842. Auxiliaries were planted throughout the state, especially in Broome, Yates, Columbia and Onondaga Counties. A weekly paper called the *Organ* was issued by this organization as a means to further its cause and its ideals. So successful was this society that in 1844 it became nation-wide in its organization. The following year there was formed another society, the Templars of Honor and Temperance, which felt that for greater success, the antiliquor advocates should undertake more educational work. To insure this objective and at the same time to enlist a greater number of members, an air of secrecy was given to the organization. Grips, signs and a regalia were adopted, and a number of temples were scattered throughout New York and other states.

About the same time that the Templars of Honor and Temperance were started, the grand division of the Sons of Temperance in New York attempted to foster an organization that would enlist the interest of the youth of the country. The idea did not receive much support at that time, but in 1845 the

Pennsylvania division embraced the idea and aided in the foundation of the Cadets. Within two years, this society, now known as the Cadets of Temperance, became a national affair with branches in New York. Other organizations that existed before 1850 were the Father Mathew Societies, which made headway among Roman Catholics, and the Cold Water Armies. These and the others mentioned above were pledged to a program of total abstinence, a feature which characterized the temperance movement from 1826, when the Hector Society adopted a T-Totaler pledge.

All of these societies sought to increase their influence by personal solicitation, propaganda and education; by persuading individuals to sign the pledge; and by petitioning the state legislature to pass suitable resolutions and laws. By 1841, public sentiment had reached a point where a state committee was able to report favorably upon the idea of local option. The legislature, however, did not accept their findings, but in 1845 a measure was passed providing for a statewide election on the question of local option. In May, 1846, the electorate of the state, except in New York City which was not subject to the terms of this law, went to the polls to vote on license or no license. Out of the 856 towns that voted on this question, 528 were won by the temperance forces. The victory, however, was shortlived, as the state legislature repealed the law in 1847. Seven years later, however, a prohibition act was passed, which Governor Seymour vetoed as unconstitutional. He was denounced from the pulpit and in the press and defeated for reelection by Myron H. Clark, who ran on a fusion ticket with prohibition as the main issue. The prohibition act of 1855 was pronounced unconstitutional by the court of appeals, and was followed, in 1857, by strict license laws which were indifferently enforced. The temperance societies, however, had ample reason to feel satisfied with their position. Opinion throughout the

state was clearly swinging their way. Effective spade work had been done, and the way was paved for extensive gains later in the century.

#### HOSTILITY TO SECRET SOCIETIES

About the same time that temperance became an issue, considerable feeling was aroused over the activities of secret societies. To many people, secret organizations were both anti-Christian and un-American, while others argued that these societies exerted an unwholesome influence on political life. This hostile feeling was greatly increased as a result of the Morgan episode. William Morgan, it appears, at one time had been a member of the Batavia Lodge of the Masonic order, as well as of the Royal Arch Masons of Le Roy. For reasons that are not altogether clear, Morgan's relations with these organizations do not seem to have been happy. Pinched by poverty and disheartened by the treatment that he considered he was receiving from his fellow Masons, Morgan conceived the idea of publishing an exposé of Masonry and in this way recouping his fallen fortunes. Gaining the ear of several others, notably one David C. Miller, plans were laid for the printing of a book which it was hoped would have a nation-wide sale. Dissensions, it seems, arose between these two men; dissensions which, according to the view of Batavia Masons, led Miller to take steps toward robbing Morgan of his share of the profit. To gain this end, so the argument ran, Miller broke with Morgan, who in desperation accepted the offer of the local lodge to move over into Canada. In accordance with this agreement, Morgan was arrested and lodged in a jail at Canandaigua on a charge of petit larceny. Late Monday night, September 11, 1826, Morgan was released from custody and, according to the version of the Batavia Masons, was taken, more or less with his own consent,

to old Fort Niagara and then, after confinement there for a time, released into Canada.

The Masons claimed that they never saw him again. On the other hand, Morgan's disappearance was declared by Miller and those who hated Masonry, to have been a case of forcible abduction. And when later the badly decomposed body of a man was found in Lake Ontario, north of Albion which was less than twenty-five miles from Batavia, Miller and his group raised the cry that Morgan had been murdered because of his having revealed the secrets of Masonry. Although the identification of the body was made by Morgan's wife, one Mrs. Timothy Munroe, of Upper Canada, claimed the body as that of her husband, who had disappeared from home some time previously.

The evidence in the entire affair was most uncertain. Each side insisted on the merits of its case, and called upon public opinion to indorse its position. In general, the Masons appear to have received the brunt of the attack, which rapidly swept all before it. By February, 1828, feeling demonstrated itself so intensely that steps were taken toward the formation of an Antimasonic party. The movement spread rapidly into other counties and, before the year was over, had become both a state and a national issue. In the campaign of 1828, Antimasonic principles became an outstanding topic within New York, with the result that the electoral vote of the state was split between Jackson and Adams. Two years later, a national Antimasonic party was formed at Philadelphia, and at Baltimore in September, 1831, nominated William Wirt for president. In New York, the state convention of this party was held at Utica. By the time of the November elections, however, interest in the evils of Masonry had diminished to a marked degree; so much so that the actual vote of this party was practically negligible, Jackson gaining the entire New York electoral vote. Thereafter, the Antimasonic movement gradually disappeared, its adherents

slowly joining the recently formed National Republican party. Opposition to secrecy, on the ground that it was un-American, continued to influence a number of people for some time. Some of this feeling doubtless spread into college circles, where certain Greek-letter secret fraternities had existed since about 1825. In opposition to the ideals and practices of these college societies, there developed at Williams College an antisecret society that became, in time, the mother chapter of the modern college fraternity, Delta Upsilon. Chapters of this fraternity were founded at Union and Hamilton Colleges. A study of the early records of Delta Upsilon fails to show any connection between the Morgan affair and the growth of antisecrecy in college life. It is, of course, possible that Antimasonry may have influenced some of the founders of this fraternity, but of this there is no tangible evidence.

In addition to the Antimasonic movement, slavery, peace, temperance and woman's rights, there existed a number of movements concerning which very little is known. Among these, the most important were the National Tract Society, which was founded in New York City in 1825, and financed in part by Arthur Tappan; the American Bible Society, established in 1816; the New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society, incorporated in 1841; and the American and Foreign Bible Society, founded in 1837. Then again, there were organizations against dueling, swearing, violation of the Sabbath, and scores of societies that concerned themselves with particular humanitarian activities. For example, there was the Albany Society of Brotherly Love, incorporated in 1844; the Association for Relief of Aged Females in New York City; and the founding of the New York City Charitable Organization, in 1810. Concerning these and many other bodies interested in medical, educational and intellectual development, very little investigation has as yet been made. There is a definite need for more intensive research

into the activities of these reforming organizations that appealed so generally to the people of New York during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Manifestation of a discontent with the old order was revealed in the appearance of novel religious sects. The Shakers were founded by Mother Ann Lee, at Watervliet, during the Revolution, and societies were planted at Lebanon and elsewhere. Members wore a distinctive costume, owned property in common, practiced celibacy and advocated nonresistance. Jemima Wilkinson, "the Universal Friend," with a few followers settled at Jerusalem, in what is now Yates County, in 1789, where she died in 1819. In doctrines and religious service her colony resembled the Shakers. Mormonism had its origin at Fayette, Seneca County, where in 1830 Joseph Smith, as the prophet of a new dispensation, organized the church.

The Millerites were the followers of William Miller, a farmer preacher of Low Hampton, Washington County, who in 1833 foretold the second coming of Christ and the destruction of the world in 1843. His converts numbered thousands. Modern spiritualism had its origin at Hydesville, near Rochester, where in 1848 the Fox sisters first heard the rappings of spirits on the walls and furniture, and professed ability to converse with the dead. Soon "circles" were formed throughout the nation.

Several attempts were made to establish societies in New York to demonstrate the practicability of an improved group living, such as was being advocated in Europe. Albert Brisbane, a social reformer born in Batavia, New York, in 1809, at the age of eighteen left this state for study in Paris and Berlin. He returned to New York in 1834, a disciple of Fourier. Five years later, he organized a society and published his *Social Destiny of Man*, which induced Horace Greeley to help him establish the short-lived newspaper, the *Future*. Through the *Tribune*, the *Chronicle*, the *Plebeian*, the *Phalanx* and the *Dial*, Brisbane

succeeded in starting about forty experimental stations in Fourierism, none of which prospered. His later years were devoted to a new system of burial, and a method of transportation by hurling hollow balls through pneumatic tubes. To promulgate Fourierism, the American Union of Associationists was organized, with Greeley as its president. A large convention of its members was held, in 1844, in New York; the Brook Farm paper, *The Harbinger*, was transferred to the Empire State in 1847-49, and by 1850 the movement had come to an end.

The Oneida Community was established at Oneida, in 1847, by John H. Noyes, a graduate of Dartmouth College. The members lived and labored in common, and for years lived in peace. At length public sentiment, led by the clergy, turned against them, and in 1879 forced the community to abandon certain objectionable social features. The property was divided and a joint stock company organized in 1881. Under these changes, the Community still continues.

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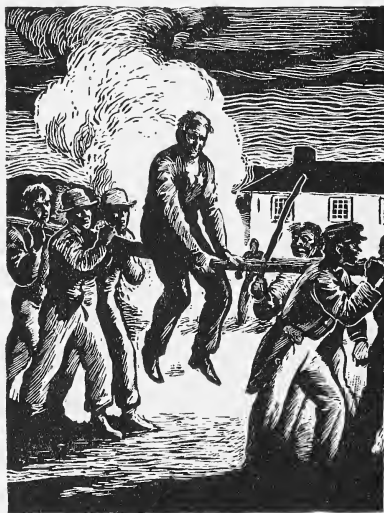


— IX —

THE ANTIRENT MOVEMENT AND  
THE CONSTITUTION OF 1846

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## THE ANTIRENT MOVEMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION OF 1846

### OPPOSITION TO THE LANDED ARISTOCRACY

AS the middle of the century approached, it became obvious that the constitution under which the state was governed was, in the minds of a great part of the people, antiquated. The constitution of 1821 did not give that immediate and complete control over their own affairs that the plain people of the state felt to be their due, and it permitted institutions and practices to survive which bore the stamp of an earlier and narrower conception of individual rights. There were many evidences of this changing sentiment.

It was increasingly difficult to hold the old parties together. In 1836, the Friends of Equal Rights, organized within though in sharp criticism of the old Democratic party, at a convention drew up a declaration of natural rights and of opposition to monopolies and corporations. United with them were a Workingmen's party and, under the nickname Locofocos, they exercised a subversive influence on the old parties for several elections. They declared, according to the *New York Evening Post* of July 23, 1836, that "the leaders of the aristocracy of both the great political parties of the state . . . have deceived the workingmen by false pretenses of political honesty and justice." The Native American party, organized in New York City in 1844, was formed not so much to wrest the American government from the classes which had heretofore exercised so much control over it, as to retain for the plain men already on the ground the offices and influences threatened by the early influx of Irish and other foreign immigrants. The Hunkers were the aristocratic section of the Democratic party.

The slavery question was already interpenetrating all political thought in the United States, and the decade after 1830 saw the antiabolition riots in New York and Utica, and the formation, in opposition, of antislavery societies in every county in the state. Although the Barnburners, as a distinct faction opposing the extension of slavery, did not emerge till later, the cleft in the old Democratic party, of which they were representative, had been long widening. The slavery controversy was only one of the many influences, material and moral, that were weakening the habit of accepting the opinion and the guidance of those who had been described in the past as "the natural leaders of society." The controversies connected with the financing of the Erie Canal gave abundant opportunities, on a somewhat different plane, for a division of the people according to natural temperament or supposed self-interest into radicals and conservatives.

There was, at the same time, much criticism of existing economic, as well as political and social, privilege. The class struggle, the tyranny of monopolies, the indefensible character of the inheritance of capital, were the subjects of books, lectures, political platforms and campaign speeches. Nor was it the old Democratic party alone which was breaking up; the Whigs who fought the campaign of 1840, in the state as in the nation, were a new party, rejecting Webster, partially at least, on the ground that he was aristocratic, and declaring for the plain farmers and mechanics whom Harrison was supposed to represent.

From the somewhat incoherent and negative criticism of the time, certain proposals of change gradually emerged: more popular elections, a reformed judiciary, more direct legislative control over finances, and a modernization of the law for the ownership and tenure of land. It is curious to note that in a supposititious new constitution for the state, drawn up in 1837 as a declaration of their principles by one of the radical political

organizations, this last proposal, the reform of land tenure, is not mentioned. Yet within a few months began the so-called antirent riots which quite convulsed a large part of the state, led to long and widespread controversy and furnished the most conspicuous immediate occasion for the calling of a convention and the adoption of the constitution of 1846.

The land history of New York has been different in many respects from that of all other American colonies and states. It was a system of ownership of large tracts, not held and utilized as large farms, as in the South, but disposed of to actual settlers and to farmers of the usual type of the northern states, except that the sale was an incomplete transfer which left certain claims in the hands of the original owner.

The earliest tract, the largest, and, as a matter of fact, that where the most serious difficulties eventually arose, was the so-called manor of Rensselaerswyck, lying about Albany on both sides of the Hudson. It was a survival from the earliest period of Dutch settlement, although at the time of which we are treating its population was largely English, or Americans descended from English ancestry. The grant had been made originally by the Dutch West India Company to one of its members, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, a merchant of Amsterdam, who completed its acquisition by purchases from the Indians. It extended twenty-four miles along the river and twenty-four miles back from the river in each direction. It was therefore a lordly domain twenty-four by forty-eight miles in extent, covering almost all of the present counties of Albany and Rensselaer and part of Columbia. Its possession, coming down from father to son, was acknowledged by the English conquerors of New Netherland and confirmed by a charter granted by the English governor in 1685, and by the crown in 1704. These grants transformed the old Dutch patroonship into an English manor, having manorial jurisdiction and paying to the crown, as

acknowledgment of tenure, fifty bushels of wheat a year. Its possession was similarly acknowledged by the state government at the time of the Revolution, the estate being then in the hands of Stephen Van Rensselaer, fifth descendant in a direct line from the original patroon.

The Dutch practice of making large grants was followed by that of the English governors representing the crown. One of the earliest and largest was the Livingston grant, occupying what is at present the southern half of Columbia County, the region surrounding the town of Hudson. In 1680, Robert Livingston, a government official in the colony, son of a Scotch clergyman, received from Governor Dongan permission to buy from the Indians certain lands supposed to amount to about 2,000 acres. Successive purchases and grants were so managed that in some way these eventually extended ten miles in length along the river and eighteen miles in breadth eastward back from the river, containing more than 160,000 acres. These lands were erected into a manor with the usual manorial jurisdictions, including in addition the right of sending a representative to the colonial Assembly. It was known as the manor of Livingston; and, like Rensselaerswyck, it descended from father to son until in 1792, primogeniture having ceased, it was bequeathed to the four sons of the third Robert Livingston. Similarly Scarsdale, Pelham, Cortlandt, Morrisania, Fordham and Philipsburgh were manors covering most of Westchester County. As one went eastward on Long Island, one crossed the manor of Queen's Village and then the noble area of Saint George, and finally the similar grants of Shelter Island and Gardiners Island. The counties lying east of the Hudson were, for the most part, granted in large tracts although not organized as manors.

These early grants were originally, or soon became, the seats of a landed aristocracy, a class which played a large part in the



early history of the state. There were other large tracts which were merely a matter of financial speculation. Johannes Hardenberg and others of Kingston, Ulster County, purchased from the Indians and secured by grant from the crown a vast tract covering about one-half of each of the present counties of Delaware, Ulster, Sullivan and Greene. In 1749, the Hardenberg patent was divided and disposed of in forty-two great tracts, such as the Desbrosses tract of 60,000 acres, the Verplanck tract of 50,000 acres, the Morgan Lewis estate of 20,000 acres, and others. In Schoharie County were the Blenheim patent of 40,000 acres, Scott's patent of 56,000 acres, and others, covering almost the whole of that county; to the northwestward John Harper, in 1768, bought 250,000 acres. Of all these, the Indian titles were extinguished by the purchasers. To call the considerations "nominal" payments is probably an exaggerated expression. Some slight sum and some still smaller quitrents were paid to the crown.

To these quitrents and to the land remaining unsold the state government fell heir at the Revolution. Its policy in disposing of them remained much the same, the extent of the grants being even greater, though the price obtained by the state government was, in the excitement of speculation just after the Revolution, somewhat larger. In 1791, the commissioners of the land office sold 5,500,000 acres in tracts of over 2,000 acres each, realizing almost a million dollars from the sale. In this way, the great central and northwestern lands of the state were put in the hands of speculators. The Macomb purchase comprised 3,635,000 acres; the Smith purchase, covering ten townships, included 270,000 acres. A kaleidoscopic series of negotiations placed the soil of the fourteen western counties of the state in the hands, contemporaneously or successively, of Phelps and Gorham of Massachusetts, Robert Morris of Philadelphia, William Pulteney of England, and a group of Dutch owners

of the Holland Purchase, the last sale including the land of eight counties.

Thus, in the colonial and the early modern period, an extent of potentially arable land equal to something more than one-half the surface of England had been disposed of, not, indeed, exactly as William the Conqueror had disposed of that soil to his followers, but nevertheless to men who might remain intermediaries between the government and the actual farmer. But all the influences of time and place were against the permanence of such an arrangement. The hundreds of millions of acres of land available in New England, the Middle States, the South and the beckoning West, much of it obtainable on the easiest of terms and under the most favorable political and social conditions, deprived the holders of large tracts in New York of the opportunity of driving too hard a bargain, so that when buyers appeared with ready money, land was sold them outright and they became landowning farmers of the usual American type. When the farmer had little or no capital, land was nevertheless sold him on very long terms, guaranteed by a written contract. This was characteristic of the center of the state and of the Holland Purchase of the six western counties. There remained the curious system of nominal ownership limited by money rents, semifeudal services, restrictions on sales, and the possibility of seizure characteristic of the counties along the Hudson and of much of the southeastern third of the state. Both of these forms of tenure were apt to be spoken of as "leasehold."

#### EVILS OF THE LEASEHOLD SYSTEM

The varieties of leasehold were numerous. Sometimes the conditions were undeniably burdensome, derogatory to the tenant and medieval in suggestion. For instance, a lease of eighty

acres given by Robert Livingston, February 28, 1772, to Jacob Rosman and his wife for their two lives called for a yearly payment of thirty "schipples" of wheat, four fat hens and the performance with an able man and a pair of horses or oxen with a wagon, plow or sled of two days labor, or else a payment of twelve shillings for each day. He must in addition clear and fit for cultivation two acres each year, sow at least twelve bushels of seed wheat, spread on the farm all manures made on the farm, plant an orchard of one hundred apple and pear trees, build within five years a barn at least thirty by twenty feet and a hayrack, and keep these and the fences in good order, besides paying all taxes. He had his grain ground at one of the Livingston mills, paying one-tenth as toll; he paid six shillings a year for the support of the minister of the parish church; and he agreed not to keep a tavern or carry on a trade, or to entertain strangers on the farm. To "sell" his farm before the expiration of the lease, he must obtain the consent of the Livingston lord of the manor and pay him one-third of what he received from it. This was, of course, a far more drastic requirement than existed in the case of most lands, but there was one provision or intimation in it that was practically universal in such leases, yet was essentially indefensible. The owner or tenant, whichever he may be called, received only the title to rough land; he had to create his farm for himself, clearing the trees, draining, fencing, building the barn and in most cases the house. This was of especially questionable justice, when, as in the case just given and as was generally the case in the Livingston lands, possession came to an end with the death of the two or three persons named in the deed or at the end of some period, even a long one, the farm then reverting to the grantor. Even when the grant was perpetual, as was usually the provision in the Blenheim, Kortright, Rensselaer and Great Hardenberg leases, the long continuance of payments on farms that were, except for a some-

what visionary and antiquated claim, the product of the farmer's own efforts, seemed abnormal. This was especially true of the fine to the original owner on alienation by the holder. Most leases required, as did the one just described, payments to the landlord of one-third or one-fourth of what the seller received for his farm. This was a substantial amount, especially after New Englanders began to migrate to the more fertile soil of New York, and the local population increased and shifted. Eight contiguous farms in Rensselaer County, covering about 150 acres each, of which the statistical record happens to have been preserved, had paid on such sales, from the time of their settlement to 1850, \$5,237.49, or an average of \$660 apiece. One farm of 196 acres had been sold six times since its settlement in 1790, and had paid to the owner \$1,162.64, that is, about \$200 in each sale. One farm of 69 acres gave to the landlord at one sale \$528.

The straight annual payments were less anomalous, though it must always be remembered that the farmer broke in his own land and that the payments ran on forever, or at least as long as the tenant retained his farm. They were, in perpetual leases, an irredeemable ground rent. On the other hand, the farmer usually obtained this land without any initial payment; it was for him a golden opportunity to begin life under as favorable conditions as the pioneer ever enjoys and without the need for any serious amount of capital. The payment was not usually heavy. It was apt to be from 10 to 15 bushels of wheat per 100 acres, or from 15 to 35 bushels for an average farm of 160 acres. The wheat was in some cases commuted at \$1 a bushel. In addition, in all the earlier leases there was a payment of "four fat hens," a traditional requirement that may be found in manorial extents back to the twelfth century, and on widely separated lands. Those, with the one or more days' service, equally traditional, were often commuted at \$1 or \$2 for the

hens and the same for the day's work. The actual yearly rent for a farm therefore was seldom more than \$25—sometimes less. It was frequently remarked by apologists for the system that the yearly produce of one acre, or at most of an acre and a half, would pay the yearly rent of the whole farm—an estimate somewhat liberal as to produce and somewhat skimmed as to payments, and fallacious in some other respects, but not altogether wide of the mark. The landlord of course had the usual claim of distraint from the tenant's goods for unpaid rent and, in case of long-continued arrears, might resume possession of the property. This system of land tenure was early subjected to criticism. The surveyor-general of the royal province, Cadwallader Colden, an observant official, noted most of its bad qualities in a report to the newly appointed governor in 1732. He spoke of the universal grants to favorites by earlier governors, at nominal quitrents, by which the crown was deprived of its proper revenue, then complained of the effect of their policy of grants on lease to tenants, in place of outright sales.

Though this country was settled many years before Pennsylvania and some of the neighboring colonies, and has many advantages over them as to . . . convenience of trade, it is not nearly so well cultivated nor are there near such a number of inhabitants as in the others in proportion to the quantity of land. . . . Every year the young people go from this province and purchase lands in the neighboring colonies . . . for one great reason of people's (the better sort especially) leaving their country was to avoid the dependence on landlords and enjoy lands in fee to descend to their posterity, that their children may reap the benefit of their labor and industry. There is the more reason for this because the first purchase of unimproved land is but a trifle to the charge of improving it.

This criticism bore little if any fruit, and the same was true of an appeal by tenants themselves sixty years later. Although the law of July 12, 1782, abolished the system of entail and

permitted certain tenants to hold land in fee simple, it did not solve the problem of manorial leases. In 1795, 214 inhabitants of the town of Livingston, Columbia County, the very center of the old Livingston grant, sent a petition to the state legislature asking for an investigation of the Livingston title to their land. They added, "a great part of your petitioners are tenants holding under the descendants of Robert Livingston upon terms and conditions oppressive and burdensome to the last degree, unfriendly to all great exertions of industry and tending to degrade your petitioners from the rank the God of nature destined all mankind to move in to be slaves and vassals." This claim of being, through their leases, put in a humiliating and un-American position, seems to have been not only put forward, but felt, with all sincerity. "Tribute," "serfdom," "vassalage" are the terms constantly used by the tenants to describe their position, and however inflated and exaggerated, they seem to have been heartfelt and taken seriously. A missionary traveler, Rev. John Taylor, in an account of his observations in Oneida County in the center of the state, speaking of the fact that the lands there are usually held on lease, remarks, "The Americans never can flourish when on leased lands; they have too much enterprise to work for others or to remain tenants, and where they are under the necessity of living on such lands, I find that they are greatly depressed in mind and are losing their animation."

#### THE OUTBREAK OF LAND RIOTS

Agrarian discontent was not unknown in New York in the eighteenth century. In 1751, some tenants of Robert Livingston, Jr., were warned off the Livingston Manor for failing to pay their rent. They refused either to pay or to leave, asserting that they held their grants in fee simple from Massachusetts. Fifty-eight of the Livingston and Van Rensselaer tenants petitioned

the general court of Massachusetts for protection. Livingston protested to the governor of Massachusetts, and seems to have put an obstreperous tenant in jail, after burning his home. In 1753, 60 armed men were sent by him to destroy the crops of another trouble-making tenant. The angered tenants retaliated by cutting down 1,100 trees on the manor. Arrests, seizures and proclamations failed to quiet the rioters. The land disputes were mixed up with the intercolonial boundary altercation, and the trouble did not die down until 1762. The revival of the revolt in 1766, associated with the Levelers' uprising, spread to Westchester County, where Van Cortlandt was threatened with death and the destruction of his manor house if he did not grant his tenants free titles. At Poughkeepsie, 1,700 armed Levelers appeared. Lives were lost in rioting on the Van Rensselaer Manor and troops had to be called out. After the Revolution, anti-renters revived their attack on the Livingston and Van Rensselaer titles and a sheriff was killed in 1791. From this time, for the next half century, the issue was kept alive by discussion and occasional disorders.

Further appeals to the legislature to investigate the title to the great estates, made by the inhabitants of various counties in 1811 and accompanied with a certain amount of disorder, were favorably received by the legislators, but no immediate action was taken. The petitioners did, however, request a commission, then employed in a revision of state laws, to include those relating to landlord and tenant in their consideration and to make any recommendations they saw fit. Their condemnation of the leasehold system was so severe and their proposals of a change in the law so far-reaching, that the legislation of 1846 might well have been made a full generation earlier, had the pressure of democratic opinion been as strong then as at the later date. The commissioners, made up of three judges of the supreme court of the state, declare that "restraints in the

nature of fines or quarter-sale against alienation are exceedingly objectionable and constitute rigid and unreasonable burdens upon the tenants, . . . are opposed to sound policy and the genius of our constitution." They recommended the withdrawal from the landlords of the right to forfeit leases, restricting them, in cases of violation of their leases by tenants, to damages sued for in a court of equity. They proposed that "the proprietors of great landed estates should thereafter be inhibited from granting leasehold tenures." A bill recommending these changes was brought into the Senate and passed its first and second readings, but got no further. Once more effective pressure was evidently needed to displace so deeply founded and widely extended an institution. This was provided by the series of sporadic disorders and the active agitation that began with the later thirties and had so much to do with the adoption of the constitution of 1846.

Land riots began earlier, but they were at first detached and ineffective. In Ulster, Delaware and Sullivan Counties, in 1825, in the Great Hardenberg Patent, conflicts broke out, partly between rival landowning families, and partly between tenants and their landlords. Capt. Gerardus Hardenberg, of Revolutionary fame, one of the landlords, was found by the roadside with a bullet through his heart. A local ballad tells how "They shot Gross Hardenbergh off of his horse," and an evicted tenant is said to have boasted that "he had shot a fat buck."

Other disorders occurred in the year 1836, when, on February 6, a mob at Mayville broke into the local office for Chautauqua County of the successors of the Holland Land Company, seized the books and papers of the company, took them into the middle of the road and burned them. This was the culmination of a long series of disputes concerning renewals of leases. It was followed by another riot in May, when a crowd, said to consist



of 700 men, marched on Batavia, in Genesee County, where the main office of the company was located, but found the agent fortified in his office and guarded by some 50 armed men. The militia was called out, and 50 or 60 of the ringleaders arrested. There were sympathetic stirrings at the same time in the other western counties, but the disputes were compromised, the prosecutions dropped, prisoners released, and the excitement, so far as that part of the state was concerned, subsided.

The final movement began in the old leasehold region along the Hudson. It was from this center that disorders broke out, spreading widely and stirring the country deeply, until the whole matter reached the courts, the legislature, and finally the constitutional convention. The trouble first appeared on the Van Rensselaer tract, the lands to the west and east of Albany. The fuel there had long been collecting, and the death, on January 26, 1839, of Stephen Van Rensselaer, "the old patroon," "the good patroon," "the last of the patroons," as he had been variously called, and the bequest of his lands to his two sons, set the spark. In early colonial times, there was little more settlement of the lordship than required by the conditions of the grant, and when the "last of the patroons" became of age, in 1785, great regions in his possession were still largely wilderness. In those restless days immediately after the Revolution, however, he set to work with great energy to populate his lands. Within ten years, surveys had been made, townships laid out and a large part of the remaining open land disposed of to working farmers. The leasehold system was universal. Neither then nor later would Stephen Van Rensselaer sell any of his land without reservation. Within a few years, there were 1,397 farms in Albany County, and 1,600 in Rensselaer County. The terms of the leases were much the same as those which have been already described. With the exception of a few farms leased for sixty years, the leases were all perpetual. The payment

reserved varied from 10 to 14 bushels of wheat per 100 acres, but always included the "four fat hens" and the service of a man with horse and wagon for one day a year. By early custom, the fowls and labor were commuted for a load of wood delivered at the manor house, or \$2 in money. As late as the latter part of the nineteenth century, there were people who remembered seeing the roads near the manor house in Albany blocked with wagons, bringing wood, wheat and poultry in payment of the farmers' rent in kind. "Quarter sales," that is the required payment to the landlord of the fourth of the amount received in each sale of land, were provided in every lease. The grantor also reserved the right to all water power and valuable minerals found on the land.

During his long life, Stephen Van Rensselaer ruled his enormous domain with a light and generous hand. Rents were not collected rigorously, many exemptions were granted and payments allowed to be postponed. Nevertheless, account was kept of all and when the death of the old patroon occurred, the tenants were some \$400,000 in his debt. His will was a great disappointment. He bequeathed his lands to his two sons. The arrears of rent were to be utilized to pay his own debts, which were very extensive. Tenants actually destitute, however, or victims of serious misfortune, were to have their back rents remitted. There was the deepest interest among the people as to what action the executors and heirs would take. As has been intimated, a feeling had long been growing among the people that the rents and other burdens were unjust. To contemplate not only their continuance but the collection of the long arrearages, was too much for the patience of the farmers. The western towns of Albany County lie on a long ridge, known as the Helderberg Hills, a northern extension of the Catskill Mountains. Mountaineers are always freemen, and here, at Berne, the most rugged and remote of the towns, a mass meeting was

called as soon as the provisions of the will were known and a committee of the most respectable men of the community appointed to wait upon young Stephen Van Rensselaer, the heir to the lands west of the river. Their reception was unsatisfactory. On May 22, 1839, they went to the manor office in Albany, but Van Rensselaer, himself no doubt troubled by the problem of his father's debts and the uncertainties of the situation, refused to see them, passing through their midst, as they reported, without speaking to them, and going into conference with his agent in an inner office. His answer came to them in a letter addressed to the chairman of the committee refusing any special terms. Anger spread among the farmers, while the executors of the old patroon secured writs of ejectment and *scire facias* from the supreme court of the state against those long in arrears, and placed them in the hands of the sheriffs for service.

Thereupon followed what is known locally as the "Helderberg War." Deputies of the sheriff, and finally the sheriff himself, penetrated with their writs into the back country, only to be met by disorderly crowds of farmers, amounting sometimes to 75 or 100 men, and eventually to many more, summoned together by the blowing of horns when any one learned that the "patroon's men" were out serving writs. They called the patroon's men "scoundrels," "traitors," "villains," blocked the roads, threatening and shaking their fists in the faces of the officers, seizing their horses' bridles and turning them back, setting tar barrels afire in the middle of the road, and for a long time effectually preventing any legal service. The sheriff, Michael Archer, who was a determined man, swore in a posse of 500 men early in the morning of December 2, set out from Albany with his somewhat motley company, all unarmed, for the hills, only to be met by still larger crowds mostly mounted and armed with clubs, who filled the roads, peremptorily for-

bade them to pass or to serve their writs, and made it impossible for them to proceed. The sheriff hastened back to Albany, made his way to Governor Seward, although it was eight o'clock at night, and demanded military support. The governor was in a difficult position. He had long been opposed to the leasehold system, yet his duty to suppress disorder was clear. He secured corroboration of the sheriff's account of conditions, took advice from his staff, advised the sheriff to secure warrants of arrest for those who had opposed him both from the supreme court for their contempt in resisting its writs and from a justice of the peace for their disorder, and promised his adequate support in making the arrests.

The sheriff was given the uniformed and armed military corps of the city of Albany and military companies from New York City and from other counties were ordered to be in readiness. This was a more serious effort than the civilian posse and, although as they approached the district they met great numbers of the local populace, many on horseback, armed with clubs and defiant in their attitude, they suffered no interference in their march beyond the discomforts of a bitter snowstorm and difficulty in obtaining any accommodations from hostile tavern keepers and householders, whose rooms, barns, and sheds were already occupied by the gathering farmers. The sheriff, convinced that he would be attacked if he undertook to make arrests, sent further appeals to the governor. Governor Seward now called several militia companies to Albany, provided them with two field pieces, put them at the disposal of the sheriff, and ordered him to proceed with the arrests and seizures of property against which he had attachments. At the same time, the governor issued a grave proclamation to the people of the county, calling their attention to the seriousness of their action and urging them to allow the officers to perform their duty. This combination of a show of armed force and appeal to their

orderliness sobered the rioters, who were, after all, only the plain farming population of the county. The sheriff's officers were allowed to make arrests, levy on property and clear barns and sheds of the crowds, so that they could secure protection for themselves.

Some men of local influence quietly communicated with the governor at Albany, assuring him there would be no further resistance or disorder if the militia were removed, and after a week's service they trudged the twelve miles back to Albany through deep snow, and were met and thanked for their services by the governor. The authority of settled government had, for the time, been successfully asserted. The expenses of the militia for transportation, board, lodging, and supplies was \$5,316.07. Even a show of military force comes high.

The next month, January, 1840, the governor, who had shown great discretion in his annual message, and again in March, in answer to resolutions of inquiry from the Senate, gave an account of the disturbances and his action concerning them, and at the same time recommended that some legislative action be taken to "assimilate the tenures in question to those which experience has proved to be more accordant with the principles of republican government and more conducive to the general prosperity and the peace and harmony of society." At the same time, a flood of petitions to the same effect came from groups of tenants in the lately disturbed districts. These popular petitions to the legislature were a characteristic part of the whole movement. In one year, the petitions bore the signatures of some 25,000 persons and came from fifteen counties. In answer to these recommendations and petitions, the legislature provided for the appointment of a commission to try to settle the difficulties. These commissioners had interviews with Van Rensselaer and the tenants, and succeeded in bringing about a meeting attended by two delegates from the inhabitants of each of

seven towns of the county and a representative of the landlord. The latter, after explaining that the proposal was merely a matter of expediency on the part of Mr. Van Rensselaer to allay excitement, not an acknowledgment of the justice of the claims of the tenants, offered to dispose of all his rights to any farm for a payment of \$4 per acre; or to cancel old rent in wheat, fowls and service on a farm formerly paying 22 bushels of wheat for a money rent of \$30 a year, and to release quarter sales for \$2 a year in addition. On the other hand, all arrears must be paid, with interest from the date of the death of the late proprietor, with the exception of sufferers from misfortune as defined in the will. These terms did not satisfy the tenants and their counter proposals of about half the price for farms sold and two-thirds the rent offered by the landlord, with some concession in arrears, did not satisfy the landlord; the negotiation therefore failed and the commissioners and the legislature suspended any other immediate action. The "interposition of the legislature between private parties to a contract" was much criticized by sympathizers with the landlords and others who approached the question from a legal point of view.

But both sides had acknowledged the desirability of some kind of compromise, such as either out-and-out purchase or the establishment of a settled rent. So far as the Van Rensselaer estates were concerned, through several years, with considerable litigation, amid much protest and bitterness of feeling, this was gradually attained. Their inheritance brought little enrichment to the heirs of the old patroon. Stephen Van Rensselaer, some years afterward, disposed of all his landed and manorial claims to two purchasers, at a price less than half the value computed at the time of his father's death; and William Van Rensselaer had to make an assignment to his creditors at an estimated value of less than a quarter of that at the time the estate was conveyed. Later, there was much petty specula-

tion in these claims, some of them being bought up locally at a few cents on the dollar. So far as the farmers were concerned, a better general offer, while Stephen Van Rensselaer was still owner of his estates, brought a transfer of almost 100 former tenants into the class of owners. According to a much later census, there were but 690 farms held on lease in Albany County, including not only the old Van Rensselaer leases but those of much more varied origin arising in later times. This would indicate that the old system had given way to what is practically the average throughout the country.

#### TRouble IN OTHER COUNTIES

The troubles on the Van Rensselaer estates and the legislative reaction to them had marked the years 1839, 1840 and 1841. Scarcely was their settlement in sight when similar conditions, and a similar rising tide of opposition to the old leasehold system and its accompaniments, spread through much of the leasehold region in other counties south of Albany. This movement was much more highly organized. The same old resistance to the serving of writs of distress and ejectment, the same old cry of "Down Rent," the same use of the farm horn to rouse the countryside, the same summons to the militia to the aid of the civil officers, appeared. But in addition, there was the use of disguise, the formation of associations, the entrance into politics, the pressure for legal, and eventually for constitutional, change. We hear of an "antirent war," an "antirent party," an "antirent newspaper." The echoes are heard in newspapers as far away and as provincial as the *Philadelphia Ledger* from July 27 to November 10, 1844, which followed its events step by step. The questions raised filled New York newspapers, magazines, debates, pamphlets and even sermons for three or four years, and the courts for many more.

The "Indian" disguise is an instance of the perennial fondness of mankind for mummerly and its use for self-protection, especially in backward communities where life is monotonous, and where political or social disapproval can be obviated only by secrecy. The "Indian" costume seems to have been usually a sheepskin thrown over the head, with holes cut for eyes, nose and mouth, sometimes tricked out with feathers, a horse's tail or cow's horns, the rest of the body covered with a woman's calico dress and a belt. It was a poor enough travesty of even the moderate picturesqueness of the red men who had once hunted through the same region, and may have had something to do with the intense dislike for the wearers shown by Cooper in *Satanstoe*, *The Chainbearer* and *The Redskins*.

The use of disguise was naturally conducive to violence. The country was still enough of a frontier for every man to be provided with a rifle or shotgun, and farm horses were always available as mounts when any distance was to be traversed. One of the first times the "Indians" were mentioned was in Columbia County in the summer of 1844, when several times the sheriff and his deputies were assaulted, their papers taken away and burned, and eventually two men murdered. In July of the same year, at another place, a hundred "Indians" seized the sheriff and his two deputies on their way to serve a writ, tarred and feathered the latter two, overpowered the small posse with the sheriff and turned them all back to Troy. In another case, the sheriff himself was smeared with tar, his trousers pulled up and his ankles tarred and feathered; he was then tied in his wagon and he and the deputies ordered to drive home. The burning of tar barrels along the road in that pine-growing country, as a warning against farther progress, in the earlier period, had been succeeded by the practice of tarring and feathering. Sheriff Henry C. Miller, of Columbia County, on December 12, 1844, was prevented from selling a tenant's farm in the town of



Copake, so learning of a meeting of "Calico Indians" at a place called Smoky Hollow near Claverack in that county, he gathered up a posse and raided it six days later, too late for the main meeting but in time to capture "Big Thunder," Smith A. Boughton, "Little Thunder," Mortimer C. Belden, and some others, and to carry them off to the county jail at Hudson on suspicion of some connection with a recent murder. Threats were made to rescue them and, at the sheriff's request to guard the jail, the governor called out a body of militia and ordered others to hold themselves in readiness. On their trials, which created much excitement through Columbia County, the jury at first disagreed but later convicted them; "Big Thunder" was sentenced to imprisonment for life, and two others to a term of two years. There were many other instances of outrages by men in disguise. Accordingly, Governor Wright in his first annual message on January 7, 1845, while, like his predecessor, Seward, sympathetic with the ultimate objects of the farmers, recommended the passage of a law against disguises, and this recommendation was accepted by the Assembly. Two bills were passed, one giving the sheriff greater general powers in keeping order, the other punishing appearance in disguise with arms or for any unlawful object. The "Calico Indians" still appeared, however, from time to time.

#### DISTURBANCES IN DELAWARE COUNTY

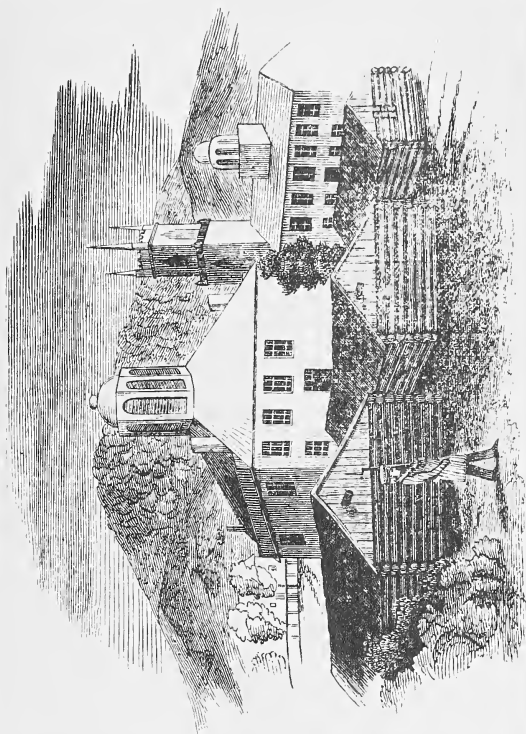
Delaware County was at this time perhaps the most disorderly section of the whole disturbed region. After the passage of the act against disguises, there were several encounters between the sheriff and parties of Indians, in one of which, when the sheriff was especially strongly supported, he attacked a party of over a hundred, all in Indian costume, and captured twelve of them, one of whom proved to be the town constable. There were

many threats of rescue of the prisoners, blowing of horns and firing of shots on the mountain opposite the county jail where they were imprisoned, and the militia were again called out to prevent possible attack. Four prisoners of this group were eventually tried, convicted and sentenced to the penitentiary for two years.

Much local feeling was by this time growing up in opposition to the riotous element, especially in the towns. This was intensified by an unfortunate encounter that occurred in the county of Delaware a year later than the events just described. In August, 1845, the sheriff with two deputies, one of whom, Steele, had been particularly active in all the difficulties, and with a warrant of distress sworn out by the agent of the owner, Charlotte D. Verplanck, to seize property on a certain farm in the town of Andes to the value of \$64 arrears of rent, tried to attach some cattle and hold a sale. No bidders appeared, but a body of 200 men, disguised and armed, soon came up and formed themselves into a semicircle facing the sheriff and his two deputies on horseback. As the officers were about to proceed with the sale, the leader of the Indians gave the command "Shoot the horses! Shoot the horses!" Two successive volleys were fired, two of the horses fell dead and Steele dropped to the ground with three balls through his body and died some hours later in the farmhouse into which he had been carried by his friends.

This deplorable occurrence led to the greatest excitement. Governor Wright immediately proclaimed the county of Delaware in a state of insurrection, called 300 militia from various regiments into service, ordered the adjutant general to take command and, no resistance showing itself, the civil officers proceeded to make a large number of arrests. The trials were held in September, 1845, and sixty men in all were convicted of various offenses and given sentences ranging from fines of

The Prisons of the Anti-Renters at Delhi.





\$20 to imprisonment at hard labor for periods of two years and more; in the case of two men convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged, the sentence later was commuted to imprisonment for life. This brought the violence, though not the agitation, to an end. Popular songs or doggerel are seldom poetic, but always interesting and doubtless representative of the time. One might cite as an example "Sweet Jeannette," a ballad sung widely through two counties narrating misfortunes which had befallen the bride of a convicted rioter. But lines like

Steele is dead and gone to hell  
And Warren Scudder is in a dangerous cell

represent a dying cause. The antirenters themselves had been turning against disorderly action, and the murder of Steele marked its end. The use of disguise gradually died out, there was no more resistance to legal action and, by the close of the year 1845, the "antirent war," so far as it was a violent movement, was over.

Distinguishable from those disorders, though probably not always entirely unconnected with them, was the formation of antirent secret societies. They were first heard of in Columbia and Delaware Counties, in 1844. They spread rapidly and were bound together by a loose bond. In some places, they included practically the whole population, and wherever they were formed, which was of course in the old leasehold districts, they included many substantial and moderate men. Many men who were not themselves directly affected by the leasehold system, yet either because of sympathy with those subjected to it, from desire to see it remedied, or from the opportunity the societies offered of attaining prominence, became active in this movement. The custom arose of members paying an assessment, usually two cents an acre on their lands, to form a fund for expenses of the association and for propaganda. They established in Dela-

ware County a newspaper called *The Voice of the People* to serve as their organ.

They soon entered politics, both locally and in state elections. They were sufficiently well organized to require candidates to state their attitude to the questions of landholding in which they were interested, and thus practically controlled the elections in seven counties, and guaranteed membership in the next Assembly of a considerable number of men pledged to vote for their measures.

Their political ambitions rose and in January, 1845, they held a state convention of antirent associations at Berne, in Albany County, the birthplace of the whole organized antirent movement. Eleven counties, the whole southeastern portion of the state, were represented. They passed resolutions deprecating the prevalent disorders, but upholding the cause of reform in land tenure, and in February appointed a committee to carry petitions to the legislature at Albany, and to remain there as long as there was a prospect of anything being accomplished.

Before tracing the effects of the agitation on legislation and its ultimate influence on the adoption and provisions of the constitution of 1846, it is necessary to stop for a moment to follow the question as it appeared in the courts. There were, of course, a multitude of special suits involving the validity of leases or the responsibility of the tenant-owner for the stipulated payments or the right of ejectment by the landlord. These were practically all decided in favor of the grantor, who was usually the plaintiff. The disorders that have been described occurred most frequently when writs of ejectment, distraint or eviction were authorized by the court. Refusal to carry out a signed agreement to make certain payments or to conform to certain conditions can hardly be permitted by a court, though there were suggestions that the agreements were against public policy and should not therefore be enforced. But the courts did not take

this view. There was also some effort to declare invalid at least some of the landlords' titles. But a tenant could not make this plea, because he had already acknowledged the grantor's title by agreeing to hold from him. Even if the holder of the land were construed, as apologists for the system declared, to be an owner, holding in fee simple, and subject only to certain agreements of purchase or possible return to the grantor, his title had nevertheless been acknowledged. Appeals were made to the state legal authorities to bring suit to test the validity of the landlords' titles, and one of the results of the agitation was to bring about a joint resolution of the two houses of the legislature, ordering the attorney general of the state to bring such suits. In 1849, he brought eleven suits for the recovery of land lying in four counties. Two years later, the supreme court gave a decision favorable to the state, but this was reversed by the court of appeals under the statute of limitations, and the titles of most of the great proprietors, whether individual or corporate, remained inviolate till they lost their importance by the attrition of voluntary sales, or perhaps in some cases they may still remain. There was much difference of opinion among lawyers as to the correctness of the decision of the courts on these questions. Indeed one writer, unusually familiar with constitutional and legal history, questions whether the law *quia emptores* perhaps did not bring all holders of leasehold lands immediately under the state, and render payments due to the crown or the state government, not to the grantor; but the judges did not generally share the tendency of the legislators to stretch precedent in favor of social advantage, and cases were generally decided on a narrow legalistic basis.

One decision, however, was of a distinctly liberal nature. This was in the De Peyster case. It declared the illegality of the "quarter sales." A law had been passed, in 1787, abolishing feudal tenures. The court of appeals now decided a condition

in leases in perpetuity requiring a payment on alienation was a restraint upon such an alienation and therefore feudal in character and consequently illegal. This diminished the value of the interest of proprietors in their leasehold lands, and did its part in bringing about those more amicable settlements which closed the majority of leasehold accounts.

#### CALL FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

It was not in the courts, however, but in the legislature and in a constitutional convention that the fundamental questions brought up in the agitation were to be settled. For it was the antirent agitation that gave the final push to the pressure for the calling of a constitutional convention and the adoption of the constitution of 1846.

The first constitution of the state, adopted in 1777, made no provision for either its amendment or replacement, and both the convention of 1801, relative to the governor's powers in the Council of Appointment, and the adoption of a new constitution in 1821 had been by an exercise of the power of the people to do whatever they felt to be for their good. The legislature suggested and made plans for the meeting of a convention, and the document it drew up was accepted at a popular election. The constitution of 1821, however, made provision for its own amendment, by a process of adoption of changes by two meetings of the legislature and approval at a regular election. It might seem, therefore, and indeed it was strenuously contended at this time, that any changes felt to be needed in the fundamental law could be made only in this way.

Attempts were made in the legislature, every year from 1841 to 1846, to place such amendments before the people, but they failed in every case but one. The air was full of desire for change. Restriction of the power of the legislature to create state debts



without the special approval of the people, more popular elections, reorganization of the judiciary, and, after 1844, some reform of land tenures, were only the most conspicuous proposals for changes which it was felt by their advocates must be placed in the constitution if they were to be effective. These and others were proposed in successive legislatures, in some cases reaching that body with the recommendation of the governor. In 1844, this had become so frequent an occurrence that it was proposed to make a new standing committee on amendments to the constitution. This, however, was defeated in one of the frequent party conflicts in the house, and instead a select committee was appointed in each case of a governor's recommendation or a member's motion for a constitutional amendment. In fact, in 1844, six non-contentious amendments were referred to this committee, recommended by it, passed by the two houses and approved at a general election. Four of these, however, were defeated on their second presentation in the Assembly. It is characteristic of the democratic tendencies of the time that the two amendments which went through without contest, by general acceptance, were one to remove the property qualification for holding office, another to forbid the removal of judges without cause given. In cases of a more contentious nature, however, partisanship, delay, differences between the two houses, and conservative fear stood in the way of the entrance of amendments upon their road to adoption. The session of 1844 was largely given up to disputes on two proposed amendments to the constitution. Though they were not of party significance, neither party was sufficiently homogeneous or sufficiently free from fear of consequences to force through either of the proposals.

The impression gradually grew, especially outside of the legislature, that the process of gradual amendment by initiation in the legislature was hopeless, and that it would be necessary to

summon a convention for the formation of an entirely new constitution. A call for a meeting on the subject was issued in November, 1843, by some liberal and prominent citizens of Albany. It met on November 21. Among its resolutions was the following:

Resolved. That we believe the constitution of this state needs revision and vital and elemental modifications, both in the extent of the power to be delegated by the people and in the manner of its administration. . . . Resolved. That we seek these changes through the agency of a convention, constituted by law, and representing the whole people, etc.

This was, of course, a purely voluntary proceeding, but among the speakers were prominent politicians, and echoes of the meeting were soon heard in the legislature. Solomon S. Hall, a Whig member from Chenango County, tried to induce the legislature to initiate a constitutional amendment for a division of the state into single elective districts. The select committee on amendments, to which it was referred, declined to report it out. Mr. Hall then introduced a bill submitting to the people the question of holding a constitutional convention. This was similarly pigeonholed by the amendments committee, although it was known that the governor himself was in favor of the proposal. An unsuccessful effort was then made to force the committee to report out the bill, with or without favorable recommendation. Later, a similar bill, introduced by a member representing the opposite party, was more successful, receiving a first-reading vote of 58 to 46, but the session closed without its passage. As a matter of fact, the radicals of both parties wanted a convention, while the conservatives of both feared it. Nevertheless, after the close of the session, thirty Whig members signed an address to the people claiming the calling of a constitutional convention as one of the objects of that party.

The later months of 1844 and the period covered by the legislative session of 1845 saw added to the pressure for a constitutional convention the antirent agitation, which now for the first time became a political force. The antirent associations appeared, as already described, in the November elections of 1844, throwing their vote, as a political party, in favor of whichever candidate was most favorable to their cause. In this way, they controlled the choice of assemblymen in seven counties. One member of the Whig party, Ira Harris of Albany, was absent in the West at the time, but was favored by the antirenters because of his reputation for liberalism, and placed on their ticket without his knowledge. He was elected, and in the legislative sessions of 1845 and 1846 and in the constitutional convention of 1846 was one of their staunchest and most influential friends. Michael Hoffman, of Herkimer County, who had spoken at the convention meeting in Albany, was elected to the Assembly by the antirenters' interest, as he was later to the convention. Though far from a majority, yet the members of the legislature pledged to the reform of land tenure through a constitutional convention were sufficiently numerous to strengthen materially the convention sentiment already existing.

The legislature which gathered at Albany in January, 1845, was therefore under two strong influences: first, exasperation at the recent outrages by the disorderly element among the antirenters; and second, a rising demand for the meeting of a constitutional convention at which their legitimate demands, as well as other current desires for reform, could be considered and, if possible, settled once for all. The former received, naturally, first consideration. Governor Silas Wright, an enlightened and liberal, but independent and determined man, in his message gave, as other governors before him had given, a sympathetic statement of the grievances of the antirenters, and a thoughtful criticism of the leasehold system. He followed this,

however, with a bitter denunciation of their violation of the law, their attacks on sheriffs and other officers, and their practice of using disguises. He refused to consider an amelioration of the system while the outrages continued, and recommended laws against disguises and the strengthening of the hands of sheriffs, the passage of which—as well as their ineffectiveness in putting an end to riots—has already been described. Governor Wright did not favor a constitutional convention, believing that all necessary changes could be made by amendment, or by legislative enactment.

Notwithstanding the objections of the governor and notwithstanding the continuance of lawlessness in Delaware and Schoharie Counties and indeed in other counties, a bill was soon introduced by a radical member of the majority party, as in the previous year, calling for the election of delegates to a constitutional convention. There was a long struggle; the debates were made the occasion for much discussion of fundamental principles of government, as well as for party pleading and personal recrimination. The bill was referred to the usual special committee on amendments to the constitution, a majority of which was, as usual, opposed to the holding of a convention, on the familiar grounds: fear of injury to the dominant party, and the danger of radicalism. The committee refused to report it until, after several caucuses of the majority, the long debates referred to above and some shrewd political dealing, most of its old opponents reluctantly yielded, and the bill was ordered out of the committee and carried in the Assembly by a vote of 83 to 33 and in the Senate by 18 to 14. It was approved at the regular election of November, 1845, by a popular majority of almost 200,000. There was no doubt that the mass of the people felt that the state was ready for a new constitution.

Before the legislature met again, the antirent disorders had reached their culmination, the tragic events in Delaware County

had occurred, and the perpetrators of that crime had been sent to prison. On December 18, the governor issued a proclamation declaring that the insurrection had been repressed and order restored, withdrawing his former proclamation and discharging the militia. From this time forward, efforts for the removal of the evils of the leasehold system took on almost the appearance of a race between the passage of laws for the alleviation of leasehold abuses in the legislature, and prohibitions of undesirable forms of tenure for the future in the new constitution. At the same time, private negotiations for better relations between the landlords and the tenants were in progress; and although, as already stated, this was slow and inconspicuous in its working, it was the principal route from the old restrictions to general complete ownership. So far as legislation was concerned, Governor Wright recommended at the next meeting of the legislature the passage of three appropriate measures: the abolition of distress for rent in all new leases; the restriction of the length of all leases of agricultural land to a period not longer than five or ten years; and the taxing of all income derived from rent. These laws were passed early in 1846.

#### THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1846

Members of the convention had been chosen at a special election in April and met on the first day of June, 1846, at Albany. There were the same number of delegates as in the Assembly, 128. It was a competent group of men, elected on party tickets, but with recognition of the necessity for ability and high standing in the community if its labors were to win acceptance. The majority were of course Democrats of one or the other faction, the minority, Whigs; 11 drawn from both these parties were claimed as distinctive antirenters, either on their former record or because of the influence of that party on their election. Yet as

no patronage was at the disposal of the convention and as the questions involved were not party questions, but little partisanship was likely to show itself, as was indeed markedly the case. It was largely a group of lawyers, 45, somewhat more than a third, being members of the bar. On the other hand, it contained 43 farmers, 8 physicians, and a scattering of business men and mechanics. Among the more conspicuous members were former Governor Bouck; Samuel J. Tilden, just beginning his famous political career; Ira Harris, the Albany lawyer especially chosen by the antirenters; C. C. Cambreleng, a member of Congress and former United States minister to Russia; Judge Ruggles, of the state supreme court; Judge Nelson, recently appointed to the United States Supreme Court. But on the whole, the convention was made up of plain men, some of the more brilliant men of the time, Seward, Greeley, Weed, Marcy, Van Buren and others being, for one reason or another, not chosen. The drawing up of a political constitution, intended to endure permanently or for a long period and to serve as a basis and standard for political life, is perhaps the most dignified service which free men can perform, and bodies chosen to perform this duty have in almost all cases risen to the requirements of their task. In this convention, discussions were in the main thoughtful and deliberate, committees were industrious, and decisions were reached in almost all cases by good majorities, sometimes so large as to approach unanimity. One of the first actions of the convention was an effort to supply itself with copies of the earlier constitutions of New York State, and other state constitutions, including those recently framed, and the Constitution of the United States.

It is true there was, especially in the early days of the convention, a good deal of mere speech-making and instances of old-fashioned eloquence, even of bathos, such as the warning at the close of a long speech, "Let those gentlemen who mounted the

dappled hobby to run the race of popularity, take care lest they receive a fall," or the description of the leasehold tenants as "groaning under the chains forged by this blistering system," or the charge against a handsome member that he wanted to change his seat so that he might be more easily seen by the ladies in the gallery; and there was as usual much contention over points of small distinction, about which their constituents probably cared little. It could hardly be expected that the 1,124 pages of fine print in which the proceedings of the convention are recorded should all be filled with words of wisdom. But, in the main, the debates and their conclusions were sensible enough. The sessions continued from June 1 to October 9, just short of five months of continuous labor.

On the second day of meeting, two questions were brought up incidentally that indicated two of the main preoccupations of the convention—a change in the organization of the judiciary, and the appointments by the governor and the Senate. In addition to these were three other main subjects of constitutional interest—representation, finance, and land. Each was the subject of committee reference, report and general discussion. The final action alone can be stated here. The reorganization of the judicial system of the state was recommended in an elaborate report of a strong committee, of which Judge Ruggles was the chairman. As might have been expected in a group of lawyers whose experiences had led them to different plans of reform, there was much difference of opinion and several minority reports. That of the majority was, however, accepted, with slight changes.

It made four important provisions, largely new. All judges were to be elected by the people, like other officers, and no longer appointed by governor and Senate. Cases in law and equity were to be settled by the same courts, not separate courts as before. There were to be thirty-two judges of a supreme court, sitting in eight judicial districts. There was to be a

court of appeals consisting of eight judges, four of them chosen directly, four selected from the supreme court justices. The Senate no longer should have appellate jurisdiction as the court for the correction of errors. There was to be one local judge in each county. No judicial officers, except justices of the peace, could receive any fees.

Election instead of appointment of judges was typical of the general action. All officers, state and local, with the fewest exceptions, were now to be chosen by popular election. It was the "people's constitution" and the intention was to extend popular control as far as was in any way possible. The grandiose project of the Erie Canal, with all its implications, had largely dominated legislation, administration, politics and finances for a whole generation, and the adoption of a new constitution had necessarily to take cognizance of it. It was therefore so linked with the general finances of the state as to preclude excessive legislative grants and to provide for the payment of state debts so as, in the words of the chairman of the committee, Michael Hoffman, quite unaware of the foreign derelictions of a distant future, "to remove from representative government the reproaches cast upon us on the other side of the water."

"Representative government," so far as New York was concerned, was to be more representative than in the past. Senators and Assemblymen were to be elected each for his own single district, Senators for two years only, Assemblymen for one year. Suffrage was to be universal for white men above twenty-one years of age; the question of extending the suffrage to all Negroes was referred to the people to be decided by a special subsequent vote, by which, it may be said, it was denied them.

The question of land tenures was not brought up till within a week of the close of the convention. This was not so much that it was either feared or disregarded as that it had ceased to be a contentious question. The legal decisions that had been



given, the adverse laws that had been passed, the disintegration of the leasehold system under the influence of general criticism and disapproval and of abundant opportunity to obtain land on more favorable terms, had left the question one of minor significance. When a series of resolutions tending to prevent its extension or reestablishment was introduced by the chairman of the committee that had been appointed "On the creation and division of estates in lands," some delegates argued that these were unnecessary and that they might interfere with town leases; but none had a word to say in favor of the old tenures or of the social system of which they were a part. After some amendments, the proposed clauses were adopted and appear as sections eleven to fifteen of Article I, the "Bill of Rights" of the constitution.

All lands in the state were allodial, the constitution now stated, the absolute property of their owners, except that the state has an ultimate right of escheat in case of failure of heirs. All feudal tenures of every description, with all their incidents, are abolished, except for rents and services already lawfully created or reserved. No lease of agricultural ground hereafter, made for a longer period than twelve years, in which any rent or service is reserved will be valid. All fines, quarter sales or other restraints on alienation in leases hereafter made shall be void. Then there are certain clauses forbidding purchases from Indians and declaring invalid any grants in the state made by the king of England since October 14, 1775. Notwithstanding some debate and protest from lawyers, the land clauses of the constitution were carried by large majorities. They do not seem very significant. They prohibited action for the future, they did not invalidate any agreements made in the past; they indicated that the leasehold system had passed or was passing away, rather than themselves helping seriously to bring about its destruction. Nevertheless, they were evidently a satisfaction to

the antirenters. Their representatives in the convention argued and pleaded for their passage, and elicited judgments condemnatory of the leasehold system, even from those who doubted the propriety of including these provisions in the new constitution. The real significance of the antirent agitation for the constitutional history of the state is to be found in the added pressure it furnished for holding the convention, rather than in the influence it exerted on its course of action.

The constitution made provision for its own easy amendment, and also provided that every twenty years the people should vote on the question of whether they wished a convention to be called to draw up a new constitution, to be submitted to popular vote. The new constitution declared inviolate the funds already established for the support of the common and higher schools; it provided a method for granting incorporation under general law, to obviate the scandals formerly arising from private grants; it took steps "to render the business of banking more safe and responsible." Finally it provided for a vote of approval or disapproval of its labors by the people, and, in anticipation of that vote, on the last day of its sitting issued a list of its achievements and an appeal for their acceptance. This acceptance was given in the election of November 3, 1846, by a favorable vote of 221,528 to 92,436. The constitution of 1846 made many alterations in the old system; few essential changes have been made since.

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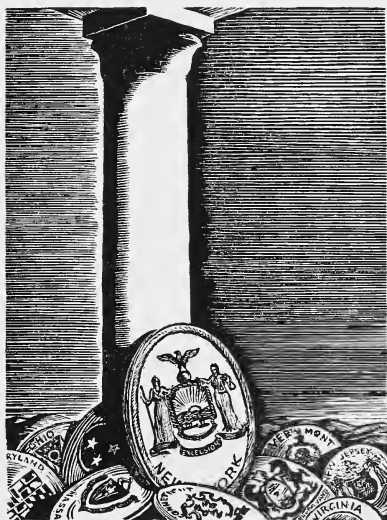
# NEW YORK BECOMES THE EMPIRE STATE

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## NEW YORK BECOMES THE EMPIRE STATE

### EVOLUTION OF STATE BOUNDARIES

THE natural advantages of New York State, which marked this commonwealth for greatness as the abode of a resourceful and self-reliant people, have been set forth in previous chapters where the trends during the colonial and early statehood periods have been discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the inhabitants of this region, by utilizing the favorable contributions of geography and climate and by exercising their capacity for human progress, gradually developed a social, cultural and economic organization deserving the designation of the Empire State. To summarize the tendencies and patterns which reveal the evolution of the primacy of New York State from the conclusion of the Revolution to the middle of the nineteenth century, it has seemed desirable to reinterpret in general terms the ground covered in Volumes V and VI. This explanation will be preceded by an account of the manner in which New York's physical extent was fashioned.

The determination of the boundaries of this state was not an accident, but was due in part to limitations set by rivers, large lakes and the ocean, and in part to certain historical influences. The present boundaries, covering 1,245 miles, are derived from the Dutch claims, the English grant to the Duke of York, the submission of the Iroquois to the English crown, the defeat of the French in 1763 and the recognition of independence in 1783. The designation of definite lines involved factors of geographic and historical importance, and resulted from a series of compromises of conflicting claims.

The States General in Holland, in 1614, set forth a claim to a vast tract of North America called New Netherland, extend-

ing from the forty-fifth down to the fortieth degree, "between New France and Virginia." New England settlements soon pushed the eastern boundary of New Netherland back to the Connecticut River, so that in 1656 Van der Donck described the boundaries as Virginia, the Atlantic, the Fresh River and the Saint Lawrence.

The region granted to the Duke of York in 1664 embraced all the mainland from the Connecticut to Delaware Bay, together with a large part of Maine and certain islands. The duke in turn granted what is now New Jersey to Lord John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. Connecticut relinquished to the duke all claim to Long Island, but at the same time contended that New York's eastern boundary on the coast ended "about twelve miles east of Westchester." In 1664 the line was fixed from the mouth of the Mamaroneck River northward to the Massachusetts line. In the organization of counties in 1683, while Dutchess extended "eastward into the woods twenty miles," Westchester and Albany Counties' eastern boundaries were undefined. This same year commissioners of New York and Connecticut agreed that the interprovincial line should run approximately as it does today—it was more clearly defined in 1700—and the king confirmed the arrangement. For conceding to Connecticut a rectangular strip along the Sound west of the line, New York was to receive as compensation the "Oblong" of 64,440 acres to the northward. Between 1718 and 1731, surveyors proceeded to designate the boundary, which remained undisturbed until 1855, when a controversy arose over a strip of 2,600 acres which after much bickering was finally settled in 1880.

Meanwhile, in 1691, a second charter to Massachusetts Bay extended its bounds westward as far as those of Connecticut. Seven years before, the English court of chancery had adjudged the first Massachusetts charter void, and in 1685 James II had

extended the patent of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck twenty-four miles east and west of the Hudson. Westenhook, granted in 1705, reached thirty miles east of the Hudson and the grant of Hoosick ran even farther to the east. Massachusetts, in 1719, appointed three commissioners to join with New York representatives to determine the line, but New York refused to act and the disputed line continued. Not until 1754 did New York name commissioners to negotiate with Massachusetts delegates, and they were instructed to insist at first upon the Connecticut River as New York's eastern boundary. If that failed, they were to compromise on some line eastward of all New York grants. As a last resort, a "temporary line" might be proposed. But failing to agree, Massachusetts proposed arbitration, while New York offered a line that cut through the Westenhook patent, and negotiations were deadlocked until the Lords of Trade, in 1757, proposed as a compromise a line running northward from the western boundary of Connecticut. A sort of border warfare arose between the Livingstons and encroachers from Massachusetts, but ten years later New York consented to have such a line surveyed. The matter was not settled, however, until 1786 when United States commissioners designated the line. Governor Clinton, in 1788, announced that the long dispute had been adjusted.

Relying on the grant to the Duke of York in 1664, New York claimed the Connecticut as the boundary between its territory and New Hampshire. This claim seemed to be upheld a century later by an Order in Council, and by the organization of Cumberland County in 1766 and of Gloucester County in 1770 as political divisions of New York. The recognition of Vermont as a state fixed the boundary as it is today, although no permanent monuments were erected until 1812-14.

In 1737, Governor Clarke described the southern boundary of New York as being the Atlantic from Sandy Hook to the

Hudson, up that river to the forty-first degree, then northwesterly to the Delaware River and up that stream to the forty-second degree, and then westward to Lake Erie. This is approximately the southern boundary of the state today. Governor Tryon, in 1774, made further claims which included all of the present Ontario as far northward as the forty-fifth degree. In 1785-87, New York and Pennsylvania surveyed the boundary line and set markers. A small triangular tract, with a shore line of thirty miles on Lake Erie, which New York had ceded to Congress, was transferred by that body in 1788 to Pennsylvania.

The Dutch had maintained, as early as 1614, that the northern line of their province was on the forty-fifth degree, but for a century and a half the line was in dispute. Governor Clinton, in 1749, wrote that it would have to be settled "by occupancy or force." After the defeat of the French, a royal proclamation designated the forty-fifth degree as the New York-Quebec boundary. Governor Moore, in 1766, was interested in determining the exact line, and had the assistance of Robert Harpur of King's College; and the line was surveyed from the Connecticut River to the Saint Lawrence in 1771-74. Governor Tryon, in describing New York's boundaries, ran the northern line along the forty-fifth degree westward across the Saint Lawrence, through the present province of Ontario to a line extending northward from Pennsylvania's western boundary. The Quebec Act, however, fixed the line along the rivers and the Great Lakes. The Continental Congress, in 1779, accepted Governor Tryon's interpretation, and this boundary was actually in the preliminary articles of peace in 1782, but was changed on November 25 to follow the line given in the Quebec Act. Following the War of 1812, New York's northern boundary was resurveyed, in 1818-19, when it was found that the line of 1774 did not follow the forty-fifth degree to the Saint Lawrence. For instance, at Rouses Point, the line of 1774 was 4,576

feet north of the forty-fifth degree. Furthermore, the United States, accepting the early line in good faith, built a fort on what appeared, by the new line, to be British territory. After a good deal of discussion, the question was submitted to arbitration. The decision of the King of Holland, in 1831, proving unsatisfactory to the United States, the controversy was settled in 1842 by the Webster-Ashburton treaty, which recognized the line of 1774 as the true boundary, and thus saved "Fort Blunder" to the United States. From the 1774 line on the Saint Lawrence River, the boundary ran up the middle of that stream, Lake Ontario, Niagara River and Lake Erie. This line was run in 1822 to settle the jurisdiction over the islands.

The act of 1829 set forth the boundaries of New York State as they exist today, with the exception of a few minor changes. A treaty with New Jersey in 1833 amicably adjusted a few problems relating to the Hudson River; Massachusetts ceded "Boston Corner," with 1,018 acres, to New York in 1853; and the Connecticut line was defined satisfactorily in 1880. Thus the geographic extent of New York was the product of many forces stretching back through the Revolution and through colonial days. The difficult disputes were compromised without armed conflict, though the "Rye Rebellion" came near to violence in the last years of the seventeenth century. Areas of friction were adjusted by reason and law, and backward regions were obtained by wise concessions.

### POPULATION GROWTH AND COUNTIES

At the outbreak of the Revolution, the settlement of New York was restricted to the Hudson and the Mohawk Valleys, and a few outlying settlements. Yet in 1790, when the first census was taken, New York State had 340,120 inhabitants—about double the number in 1776—and was outranked only

by Virginia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Massachusetts. In the succeeding decade, the settlement of the region northward from Albany and of the central part of the state, to the south and west of the Mohawk Valley, proceeded rapidly. With a decennial increase of 73 per cent, New York passed Massachusetts and North Carolina, and gained considerably upon her other two rivals. By 1810, the New York settlements had reached Lake Ontario and Lake Erie; and Pennsylvania with its 810,000 people had been passed, and Virginia almost overtaken. During the decade of 1810-1820, New York's population reached 1,372,812, when it wrested the leading place from Virginia and has since held it without dispute from any other commonwealth.

Compared with New England, New York and Pennsylvania were rapidly growing sections, and during this period became the most populous states of the Union. By 1830, New York alone balanced all New England in the number of people. Virginia and Massachusetts, which in 1790 stood first and fourth in population, had now fallen to third and eighth places respectively. The ascendancy of New York was observed with little satisfaction by sister states, which had hoped to attain the power and influence brought by an expanding population and commerce. In 1829 a member of the Virginia constitutional convention asked:

Do gentlemen really believe that it is owing to any diversity in the principles of the State Governments of the two states, that New York has advanced to be the first state in the Union, and that Virginia, from being the first, is now the third in wealth and in population? Virginia ceded away her Kentucky to form a new state; and New York has retained her Genesee - there lies the whole secret.

In the two decades of 1830-1850, New York added 1,178,000 people to its population, which represented a greater increase

than the gain of Pennsylvania and Virginia combined. By the middle of the century, its population had passed the 3,000,000 mark, equaling in number the entire population of the nation at the time of the Revolution. The Federal census gave it 3,097,394 inhabitants, while Pennsylvania had 2,311,786 and Virginia only 1,421,661.

The opening of New York's frontiers directly after the Revolution afforded the primary impetus for the vast development that followed. Partly because of the method of land-holding previous to the war, settlers had avoided the colony of New York, and hence thousands of acres of fertile lands were in readiness when they were once made accessible. The breaking up of large estates and the sale and gift of over 7,000,000 acres of lands at the close of the Revolution brought a population movement that swept across the state, hard on the heels of the departing Indians. In the quarter century following the Revolution, the New York wild lands, from the New England border westward beyond the sources of the Mohawk, had been taken up by colonists characteristically western. Settlers from eastern New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia, but mainly New England farmers, swarmed into the region, felled and burned the forest, built little towns and erected mills. Coming from less fertile lands, the settlers found the area rich in agricultural opportunities.

An increase in migration and economic development, however, waited upon better facilities than were afforded by natural streams, valuable as these had been in the peopling of the state. The prosperity of the remoter parts of New York, as well as of the interior of the country, depended on the ability to market surplus products. Some of the surplus lumber and flour found their way to the Gulf of Mexico, some through the Great Lakes and the Saint Lawrence River to Montreal, and some down the Susquehanna to Baltimore. But these routes were expensive. The

development of its waterways into a great canal system was New York's bid for the commerce of the interior. The canals afforded an easy means of transportation that worked a revolution in the economic life of the state. In the wake of commerce came industry and growth in population.

The ancestry of the sixty-two counties into which New York State is divided runs back more than two centuries and a half. Under the Dutch, there were only cities, towns and patroonships. With the English conquest, there was created, in 1665, the shire of Yorkshire with its three ridings, which may be regarded as the earliest attempt at county organization. The cities, towns and patroonships were continued, being supplemented by manors and parishes. Then followed, in 1683, the act to divide the province into ten counties—New York, Westchester, Ulster, Albany, Dutchess, Orange, Richmond, Kings, Queens and Suffolk, to name them in the order followed in the act, besides Cornwall and Dukes, now outside the state. Four years later, the area covered by each county was more clearly defined. The creation of counties received the royal confirmation in 1708. The counties remained unchanged for the greater part of a century, except for an act in 1717 which annexed to Albany County a part of Livingston Manor, then in Dutchess County. A glance at the map on page 112, of Volume II, will show the vast extent of Albany County, which embraced the upper Hudson and Mohawk Valleys.

With the successful conclusion of the French and Indian War, as a result of the strong migration northward and westward out of Albany County there were created Cumberland in 1766, Gloucester in 1770, and Charlotte and Tryon Counties in 1772, making fourteen counties during the Revolution. The War for Independence brought two changes in names—Tryon became Montgomery and Charlotte became Washington in 1784. Following the Revolution, as the population spread out



along the expanding frontiers, new counties were formed reaching farther and farther westward and northward. Between 1786 and 1800, seventeen new counties were formed; and from 1800 to 1825, twenty-eight. By that date, the county organization was practically complete; for only Chemung (1836), Fulton (1838), Wyoming (1841), Schuyler (1854), Nassau (1899), and Bronx (1914), have been created since. Of the 340,120 people in the state in 1790, over three-fourths lived in what are now the Hudson River counties, and a great majority occupied the lands of the original ten counties. While the eastern portion of the state was destined to be the most heavily populated, it was not the fastest growing section during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The eastern counties, that had three-fourths of the population in 1790, had only 54 per cent in 1810. Between 1810 and 1830, the fastest growing part of the entire state was the region west of Oneida Lake. Accorded 191,000 people in 1810, these western areas had over 712,000 people twenty years later, representing an increase of 272 per cent, while the populous eastern counties gained only 46 per cent. By 1830, the population of the western counties almost equaled the population of the eastern counties. During the next two decades, however, the eastern half of the state made rapid increases in population, as it adjusted itself to manufacturing enterprises. Yet by 1850, the western counties boasted a population of 1,106,000 people, which represented about 36 per cent of the total.

In the early part of the period, population centered largely along the Hudson Valley, particularly around New York City and Albany. Only five cities had been chartered before the construction of the Erie Canal in 1817: New York, Albany, Hudson, Schenectady and Troy, the last three of no great size at the time. By 1850, there were twelve cities, containing 28 per cent of the total population, about two hundred incor-

porated villages, and over eight hundred other unincorporated communities. A conspicuous line of changing community life across the state was the area immediately along the waterways between Buffalo and New York City. From New York City to Utica, the Erie Canal had less effect on population change than was found along its course from Utica to Buffalo. Nor should it be forgotten that the railroad brought an increase in population to the southern and northern tiers of counties, much as did the canal. Most of these communities were built to serve as distributing points to the agricultural population, and, on account of their advantageous location for assembling materials and marketing products, they developed into manufacturing centers. Thus it was that Buffalo, Syracuse, Oswego, Auburn, Utica and Rochester became cities of importance. After De Witt Clinton visited the site of Rochester in 1810, he stated that there was not a single house there at the time. Statistics show that of the towns having 10,000 inhabitants or more in 1840, there was none in the United States which during the decade of 1820-1830 increased as did Rochester. It gained 421 per cent of its initial population during the period, and Buffalo followed second in rate of increase, with 314 per cent. Syracuse seems to have been third in the nation, with 282 per cent, while Utica was fourth, showing a gain of 243 per cent. Even Troy was exceeded in percentage growth only by the western cities, Louisville and Cincinnati. As the western terminus of the Erie Canal and the transfer point between it and Lake Erie, Buffalo increased its population from over 5,000 in 1825 to 19,000 ten years later. By 1855, it had nearly 75,000 inhabitants and during that decade took the place of Albany as the second city in the state. Closely joined with the canal traffic was the lake commerce, which made Buffalo a great port, a lumber center and a seat of manufacturing.

One of the most significant results of the canal system was

the development of New York City, which rose from a market town for the Hudson River to be the metropolis of the North. Between the years 1800 and 1850, its population doubled itself once every sixteen years, while that of Boston doubled only every twenty-five years, and Philadelphia every twenty years. At the middle of the century, New York City's population passed the 500,000 mark. It was the center of commerce and wealth of the country. Its steady growth had placed it at the head of all cities in the Western World in population, commerce and wealth.

#### AGRICULTURE

With the occupation of the fertile valleys of central and western New York, agriculture attained a remarkable development. For at least fifty years, New York held the leadership of the American commonwealths in the extraction of wealth from the soil until finally the westward movement of population brought under cultivation the vast wheat and cornfields of Ohio, Illinois, Iowa and the other states of the central West.

Between 1820 and 1840, agriculture reached its peak, as far as total production and number of individuals occupied are concerned. In 1820, there were 250,000 people wholly dependent upon the land for support, and the number increased steadily during the next two decades until it reached over 455,000. More people were thus engaged in farming in New York State than in any other state in the Union. The increase in improved land from 5,500,000 acres in 1821 to 12,500,000 acres in 1850, indicates the remarkable development of the industry. New York led all the states in the value of its farms and farm implements.

It was the era of improved machinery and of changed methods in transportation which gave the state its brief but glorious agricultural ascendancy. The Erie Canal supplied a tremendous

impetus to the production of wheat. Lacking earlier statistics on wheat production, some idea of this may be obtained from the amount of flour shipped by canal. In the year 1823, the amount sent from the western portion of New York equaled the whole amount which reached New Orleans from the Mississippi Valley. Flour shipments passing Utica on the canal, increased from 44,700 barrels in 1821 to 1,150,000 barrels in 1834, while wheat shipments increased from 43,000 bushels to over 1,190,000 bushels for the same period. The production of wheat formed a principal phase of New York's agriculture, and its high point was reached in 1844, when over 1,000,000 acres were put to seed and 13,400,000 bushels harvested. From then on, production of wheat dropped rapidly, as New York farmers felt the full effects of the wheat growing in Ohio and the western states, which were sending their products to the great market at New York City.

While wheat production slumped, the production of corn increased. In the majority of the states, corn was the most popular crop, for it was less liable to failure than any other and it was applied to a greater variety of useful purposes. The 600,000 acres planted in New York in 1844 rose to 900,000 acres in a decade, when it surpassed wheat, but several states outranked New York in corn production. In the cultivation of oats and barley, New York led the country, the former increasing from 20,000,000 bushels in 1840 to 26,000,000 bushels in 1850, while the latter increased over 1,000,000 bushels. Ohio, producing only a tenth as much barley, followed. New York was first in buckwheat production in 1850, and was a close second to Pennsylvania in the growing of rye. Grains reached the topmost limits in the state between 1840 and 1850. New York had early grasped its opportunity and reaped wealth from grain production before the West had been fully opened and made ready. Meanwhile, the number of farms and the acres

in farms steadily increased for some thirty years after the middle of the century.

From 1840 on, New York's agriculture became more diversified, and after the middle of the century it was centered largely in dairying, live-stock raising and horticulture. In 1821, there were some 1,200,000 neat cattle in the state, which number increased until it reached 2,105,000 in 1855, half of these being cows. In the number and value of its live stock, which reached \$75,000,000 as compared with Ohio's \$44,000,000, New York was well in the lead of other states, as it was in the value of animals slaughtered. Hay necessarily formed a valued product of the farmer, for which nearly 4,000,000 acres were used in 1844; and New York produced three times as much as Pennsylvania, which ranked second. While the country as a whole was backward in sheep raising, New York early recognized its value. The number of sheep increased rapidly from 2,150,000 in 1821 until 1845, when the peak of nearly 6,500,000 was reached. But after 1840, both sheep and hogs were gradually crowded out by dairy cows, which were beginning to bring farmers better returns.

In the production of butter and cheese, New York stood at the top. In 1850, it produced more than twice as much as Ohio, its nearest rival. Likewise in dairy products it led the country with an estimated value of \$10,500,000, while Pennsylvania ranked second with only \$3,000,000 worth. Of vegetables, some 404,500 acres were planted in 1844, which represented a high year. Potatoes were planted on over 200,000 acres, and the production of over 30,000,000 bushels in 1840 was three times as much as was harvested in any other state that year. In the total value of its market produce, New York was well in the lead.

That New York gave fruits great consideration for quantity production is evidenced by the value given them in 1850—over \$1,750,000, which was \$1,000,000 dollars greater than that

of Pennsylvania. In the production of beeswax and honey, and in the value of poultry, the state led, at the middle of the century. Between 1840 and 1850, the growth of hops received a tremendous impetus, when its production rose from 447,000 pounds to 2,500,000 pounds, representing two-thirds of the total hops production of the country. It was estimated that the aggregate value of New York's agricultural products in the year 1840 alone was over \$110,000,000, while the estimated value of manufactured products was only \$90,000,000.

### TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Closely woven into the fabric of New York's changing economic life before the fifties was its deep interest in the means and instruments of communication. The need of the hour throughout our vast national domain was expansion and, subsidiary to it, communication—some means by which easy access could be had into the interior. The isolation between East and West was partially broken down by the coming of the steamboat in 1807. When Robert Fulton's side-wheeler "Clermont" steamed 150 miles from New York City to Albany in 32 hours, it inaugurated a new era in water transportation. The principal value of this new means of transportation, however, was the development of river traffic from north and south. The steamboats multiplied rapidly, and western trade found its way down the "Father of Waters" to New Orleans. As yet no adequate means had been found to provide an easy movement from east and west to connect the interior with Atlantic tide-waters. This condition made manufacturers, agriculturalists and statesmen of the East consider some way to bring this about. Turnpikes had helped, but they were no real solution, and interest turned to canals.

From 1817 to 1837, the country entered into a mad canal

era and, in this new field of transportation, New York State took the leadership with the building of the Erie Canal, connecting the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, as given in detail in Chapter IX of Volume V. Its effects, within both the state and the nation, were so far-reaching that its construction is looked upon as the greatest event in the history of American transportation. The cost of shipping goods from the Hudson to Lake Erie was lowered from \$100 a ton to \$5, while the time of movement dropped from 20 days to an average of 9 days. The decrease in transportation costs brought prosperity and increased population. Lateral canals, connecting with the Erie, were spread across the state. Land values doubled and, in many cases near the canal, quadrupled; farm produce more than doubled in value. The raw products of the disappearing forests of western New York—lumber, staves, pot and pearlashes and the surplus agricultural products—began to flow in increasing volume down the Hudson to New York City. In 1836, about 420,000 tons of products reached tidewater by way of the Erie Canal, of which 87 per cent came from within the state. Tolls from the canals brought an increasing revenue. Immediately upon the completion of the Erie and Champlain Canals, over \$500,000 were collected. Five years later (1830), tolls were over \$1,000,000, and by 1850 the income from all the canals in the state was over \$3,200,000. The revenues from the Erie during its first ten years of operation more than repaid the initial cost of construction, an amount over \$7,000,000.

But it was not in New York State alone that the canals were effecting their revolution. Their value in opening up the border country of the Great Lakes is incalculable. In the magnitude of participation in the business and benefits of the Erie, it is probable that Ohio led the western states. In population, Ohio rose from the seventeenth place in 1800 to the third in 1840. Indiana rose from the twentieth to the tenth place. Cleveland increased

in population 464 per cent between 1820 and 1830, while Detroit gained 313 per cent during the same period. The canal became the main artery to the West for thousands of immigrants, as they faced a new opportunity. The success of the Erie stimulated canal building in Ohio and rendered a large area of that state tributary to New York. Great Lakes navigation was given a new impetus, and soon the West was turning its stream of commerce into this channel. By 1836, the western states were sending 54,000 tons of commodities to the Hudson; and, by 1851, over 1,000,000 tons came. While the products reaching tidewater from New York State during the period increased 80 per cent, the commodities from the West and Canada, nearly half of which was in wheat and flour, increased over 500 per cent.

In return for the products from the West, the industrial East sent its merchandise. It is estimated that the total tonnage moved on all the canals of New York State in 1836 was over 1,300,000, and that its total value was nearly \$68,000,000. With few exceptions, the figures increased annually so that by the middle of the century over 3,000,000 tons were sent, aggregating over \$156,000,000 in value. It is interesting to observe that, during the same period, the number of miles run by freight boats doubled, while the miles run by packets decreased considerably, showing the effect of railroad passenger service, which had become a serious competitor to the canals.

The fact that New York City was the first of the Atlantic ports to tap the resources of the West contributed as much as anything to its subsequent greatness. Its population climbed; its real and personal estate rose in value from about \$70,000,000 in 1820 to \$320,000,000 in 1850, and increased at a rapid rate thereafter. The prophecy of De Witt Clinton that the canal would make the city "the emporium of commerce, the seat of



manufactures, the focus of great money operations," was more than realized. Previous to the opening of the canal, the trade of the West was chiefly carried on through the cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia, particularly the latter, which was at the time the first city of the country in population and wealth, and in the amount of its internal commerce. Much of what the port of New York gained was the loss of these cities. Needless to say, an increasing amount of the interior products found their way down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. In the absence of the Erie Canal, it is not improbable that this southerly route would have captured the trade carried over the easterly route. A commercial alliance between the Northwest and the South, with the probable growth of racial sympathy and political kinship, might have had a decided effect upon the prosperity of this state, as well as upon the issues that culminated in the Civil War. The opening of the Erie Canal, however, gave commerce its first decisive impulse to move east and west across the country. Through this medium, New York State achieved economic unity and commercial supremacy.

Meanwhile, changes were taking place in land transportation. The same legislature which, in 1826, received the felicitations of Governor De Witt Clinton on the "auspicious consummation" of the great canal enterprise, granted a charter to the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad Company. Work was begun on the road in 1830, and in the following year the first steam railroad in New York State was in operation. In the ten years after the granting of this charter, over a hundred railroad charters were authorized by the legislature. As early as 1833, New York had invested \$17,500,000 in its railroads, although only thirty-six miles of road were then in operation. By 1850, short roads extended in many parts of the state, and a continuous line of these small roads followed the canal route to the Great Lakes

and tidewater, from Buffalo to Albany. The subsequent development has been set forth fully in other chapters of this volume.

In 1850, the total expenditures for railroads alone in the state exceeded \$60,500,000. Twenty-six lines were in operation, with over 1,500 miles of tracks, and other lines were under construction. Earnings for the year reached the enormous figure of nearly \$5,650,000, which represented the income from 4,500,000 passengers and 750,000 tons of freight carried. It is quite probable that the average loads on the Hudson River road, and on the main line from Albany to Buffalo, were greater than on any other roads in this country or in Europe, England not excepted, and that the cost of transport was less. Thus New York assumed, from the start, the foremost place as a railroad state and continued to hold the primacy over competing states in transportation to and from the seaboard, which had been secured by the canals.

To add to the efficiency of the railroads, the growth of the press and the development of big business, came the invention of the telegraph by Samuel F. B. Morse, of New York City. It was not until 1844 that he was able to convince the country that his invention was of commercial significance. The original line between Washington and Baltimore was extended to New York, and chartered the following year under the name of the Magnetic Telegraph Company. Its success was so rapid that its annual receipts increased from \$4,228 in 1846 to \$67,737 in 1851. Nearly seven hundred messages, exclusive of those for the press, were sent in one day over the Morse Albany line, in the latter year. By 1852, hundreds of miles of lines were in use in the state. Ezra Cornell, a capitalist, later the founder of Cornell University, devoted much of his time to the organization of telegraph companies, and through his efforts the Western Union Telegraph Company came into existence in 1856.

## COMMERCE AND TRADE

The value of New York's waterways was vastly enhanced by the position the Erie Canal occupied between the ocean and the Great Lakes. Possessing the finest harbor on the Atlantic coast—commodious and well protected, furnished with deep water to the very shore line of the great city, and giving into a great navigable river—the state was from the first destined to share in the foreign trade that inevitably developed upon the ocean highways to Europe, while its western entrepôt, at the foot of Lake Erie, was likewise certain of rapid growth as soon as the almost unlimited commercial possibilities of those vast inland seas began to be realized. In ten years following 1791, the value of New York's exports rose from \$2,500,000 to nearly \$20,000,000. The nation's trade in general advanced until the War of 1812, but the following period was a critical one for New York's trade. Its exports wavered, fell, and did not recover for some ten years.

Corresponding with this period of stagnation, there was taking place a fundamental change in the character of the nation's commerce. The carrying trade of the world, which had been almost an American monopoly, passed rapidly from our grasp. Thrifty ports along the coast of New England became largely decadent and our foreign trade diminished; but our coastwise and internal trade steadily grew larger. With its ample port and direct connection with the interior, New York won much of the new trade. Slowly but surely, facilities for the internal trade came to govern the entire commercial status of the principal states.

The story of the export trade of the principal commercial states up to 1845 is one of intense rivalry. In 1791, Pennsylvania stood at the top, while New York rated fifth. But of all the rivals which the state and its metropolis met upon the sea,

none put forth more strenuous efforts to secure the mastery than New England, or more particularly maritime Massachusetts. New York and Massachusetts were regarded as principal competitors for the export trade of the nation. In 1811, the two states were substantially on a par in this respect. Ten years later, New York was slightly in the lead of Massachusetts, handling about a quarter of the country's export trade. Louisiana at this time had barely 4 per cent of this trade. The products of the newly opened West, however, were descending the Mississippi in increasing volume and, from 1834 to 1843, Louisiana became the chief exporting state in the Union. But it was this period that marked the rapid growth of New York's internal trade and made possible the upbuilding of its export commerce. The value of shipments brought to tidewater on its canals was, by 1846, greater than the whole export trade of the state, and more than half the combined trade of New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Louisiana. In 1850, receipts of wheat and flour alone were 3,250,000 bushels of the former and 2,600,000 barrels of the latter, while corresponding receipts at New Orleans for the same period were 57,000 bushels and 592,000 barrels respectively.

By 1851, New York's commercial supremacy was uncontested. It exported 41 per cent of the foreign trade of the principal commercial states, amounting to \$86,000,000, while Louisiana stood second and Massachusetts third. In the country's import business, New York was far in the lead of its sister states. The value of its imports had risen 570 per cent from 1821, totaling \$141,000,000 in 1851, which represented over 60 per cent of the nation's import trade. Custom receipts of New York into the United States Treasury increased from \$5,500,000 in 1820 to nearly \$25,000,000 in 1850. While other eastern ports, like Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, had made rapid increases in population, their foreign commerce had remained

nearly stationary for a long period of years, proving that a large foreign commerce could be maintained only by a city that was able to make itself the depot of the domestic products of the country.

An important link in the internal commerce of the country was, of course, the Great Lakes waterway which the Erie Canal connected with New York's metropolis. Western produce in large quantities did not find its way to eastern markets by this route much before 1835, but from then on lake trade formed a large part of our entire domestic commerce. A chief characteristic of the lake commerce was the movement of wheat and flour, which also characterized the nation's export trade to Europe. Commencing at an early period with the scant products of the Atlantic states, the grain trade gradually ascended the Hudson River as far as navigation would permit; and where that ceased, the Erie Canal commenced and carried it to the lakes. Grain and flour receipts at Buffalo increased from over 1,000,000 bushels in 1836 to 17,700,000 bushels in 1851. The activity stimulated by the grain trade formed an important part of the state's commerce through its eight up-state collection districts, comprising Champlain, on Lake Champlain; Oswegatchie, Cape Vincent, Sackett's Harbor, Oswego and Genesee, on Lake Ontario; and Niagara and Buffalo, on Lake Erie. By 1851, the value of the traffic on all the Great Lakes amounted to over \$326,000,000, of which 45 per cent, amounting to \$145,000,000, passed through New York State ports. About 63 per cent of the entire domestic exports of the Lakes and 90 per cent of the exports to Canada were listed in the state. Buffalo alone handled \$88,000,000 worth of the coasting imports and exports, and the port of Oswego shipped half the state's exports to Canada. Tolls to the amount of \$361,000 were collected on this trade, with the largest collections in Buffalo and Oswego; and 42 per cent of the tonnage on the lakes

was enrolled in New York ports. Still another phase of the nation's commerce which New York captured was the coasting trade. From 1790 to 1810, Massachusetts held the largest enrolled tonnage of this trade, but thereafter New York took the lead. In 1850, over 6,500 vessels, with a total tonnage of 1,500,000 tons, entered and cleared the port of New York. Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century, the commercial primacy of New York State was established and has been held ever since.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WEALTH

In spite of the tremendous interest in agriculture and commerce, New York was not slow to realize that these interests were not the only profitable pursuits of its people. The unsettled conditions in Europe and the War of 1812, with the resulting decline in the productiveness of commerce, sent capital into manufacturing. Comparatively retarded at first, the rapid industrial development of the state waited upon the improved means of transportation afforded by the canals and railroads. In this development, its natural resources, so significant in the rise of agriculture and commerce, were of supreme importance. New York had easy access to sources of raw materials, such as, wheat, wool, lumber, iron and coal. It had the great market of the metropolis, with its rapidly increasing population; and, with the building of the canals and railroads, it captured the vast markets of the West. The abundance of streams and rivers, supplemented by a canal system, furnished not only a means of cheap transportation but a source of power for factories and mills.

One of the earliest industries to return considerable wealth to the state for a long period of years was the manufacture of products from grains, which exceeded in value those derived from any other raw material. The settlement of the Genesee

Valley and other sections brought a great wheat area under cultivation, which found its outlet in a group of mills at Rochester and Oswego. In 1840, the coast states from New York to Virginia raised 47 per cent of the wheat and made 65 per cent of the flour produced in the country. Ten years later, they raised 46 per cent of the wheat and made 57 per cent of the flour. New York's share of lumber and salt production was also very large.

While the products of agriculture were of considerable value in the development of manufacturing in the state, they did not of themselves control its development. When the country turned to manufacturing, New York was prepared to welcome foreign mechanical inventions and to adopt and improve them for its own industry. Thus the Arkwright machinery, Watt's steam engine and Whitney's cotton gin were ready when New York entered the textile field, which marks the beginning of modern manufacturing. The industry was slow to develop in the country, but during the embargo and the war period, from 1807 to 1815, American industry boomed and New York, as Professor Carman has shown in other chapters of this work, had a fair share of it. In 1811, the state passed 66 acts of incorporation for manufacturing and industrial purposes, 47 of which had capital listed at \$9,000,000—mostly in cotton, woolen, iron, glass and paper manufactories. During the single year 1813, 15 textile companies were chartered in the state. By 1831, there were 112 cotton factories turning 157,316 spindles, and producing 21,000,000 yards of cloth valued at over \$2,600,000. In the same year, there were 202 woolen establishments manufacturing materials valued at over \$2,500,000. By 1850, the product of cotton manufactories had increased \$1,000,000 in value, while that of woolen materials nearly trebled. In the production of woolen goods New York was surpassed only by Massachusetts, and in cotton goods by New England and Pennsylvania.

But the strength of its industry was not in its preëminence in any one phase, but rather in its prominence in all fields.

If New York was particularly outstanding in any one field during this period, it was in that of mechanical invention and machinery construction. In ranking the states by the measure of ingenuity of their citizens, New York stood first, Pennsylvania second, and Massachusetts third. As early as 1830, New York was credited with over a third of the 544 patents granted by the United States Patent Office. Twenty years later, the same relative proportion still held. Most of the inventions consisted of labor-saving devices and the application of machinery to industrial processes, which simplified methods and reduced cost. Such, for example, was the invention in 1846 of Robert Hoe's rotary "lightning" press, a machine that not only revolutionized the art of printing but also led to the manufacture of paper in quantities never before known. Another instance was the invention of the sewing machine in the same year by Elias Howe, a Boston mechanic, although the first really practical machine was not produced until 1850, by Isaac Singer, who established his plant in New York. Factory production of sewing machines began in 1852, but perhaps of more importance to the state was the impetus the invention gave to the clothing industry, which even in 1850 produced most of the factory-made clothes used in the nation. Improvements were made in farm implements and machinery, of which some \$22,000,000 worth was owned by New York farmers in 1850, and which had its part in the revolution of the nation's agriculture. The value of machinery made in the whole country, in the year 1850, was estimated at \$11,000,000, of which New York State produced more than a fourth, and Pennsylvania and Massachusetts together only a third.

But the inventions of this period were not merely of new machinery; they were largely of a utilitarian character and in-



cluded many of the devices which have raised the general standard of comfort in this country. They consisted of improvements in looms for producing figured fabrics; air-heating stoves, cooking stoves, and furnaces; hat, boot and shoe machinery, rubber goods, floor coverings, etc. Within twenty years, the principal seat of the sole-leather manufacturing had been transferred from neighboring states to the hemlock region of the Catskill Mountains, which, in the decade of 1840-50, produced more than a third of all the sole leather made in the country, and a far larger amount of upper leather than any other state.

In 1835, the value of New York's manufactures amounted to \$58,000,000, apart from domestic articles made in families. By 1850, New York had taken on the air of a manufacturing state. There were 24,000 establishments, capitalized at \$100,000,000, employing 200,000 hands, and turning out products to the value of \$238,000,000. This was far ahead of any other state. The chief articles made were farming implements, \$3,000,000; cloth, \$20,000,000; chemicals, \$62,000,000; steam engines and ships, \$13,000,000; gristmills, \$52,000,000; lumber mills, \$24,000,000; pottery and glass, \$10,000,000; leather, \$28,000,000; household goods, \$9,000,000; fine arts, \$8,000,000; and clothing, \$22,000,000. This represented 23 per cent of the total value of the nation's manufactures, while Massachusetts and Pennsylvania ranked next with 15 per cent.

The rapid progress in manufacturing brought significant changes in the type of business organization. During this period, a regular corporation system of manufactures was growing up, beside the individual enterprises and partnerships of earlier days. New York was a pioneer in this field when it passed a general incorporation act in 1811, under which most associations were organized. But the capital of these early companies was small, and they could maintain only a low margin of safety. During the 1840s the idea came home to manufacturers that their

safety lay in a smaller number of companies with a larger capital. The idea developed slowly, but the advantages of such consolidation were evident. The state constitution of 1846 made general incorporation obligatory, inaugurating an era of ever-expanding ownership for industry, and enabling the smallest investor to participate in the control of the greatest corporations. The facilities and advantages of conducting business under this method of organization were largely responsible for the rapid development of our manufacturing industries.

The effect of the state's internal improvements, its growing industry and its extensive commerce was a rapid increase in wealth. Acknowledged the commercial center of the western hemisphere by 1850, even more decisively New York had won the distinction of being its financial center. Already Wall Street was synonymous with the moneyed class. Men of brains and ideas were drawn to the metropolis by an almost irresistible impulse. One of the best evidences of the prosperity and general accumulation of wealth is the increased aggregate capital of its banks. The number of banks in 1850 was more than double that in 1831, and their capital had increased to nearly \$50,000,000. Bank loans doubled during the period, to reach the enormous figure of \$107,000,000, while deposits trebled to \$50,000,000. To facilitate the labor incident to the proportions that the banking business had attained by 1853, New York City devised a clearing house whose transactions amounted to over \$5,000,000 the following year.

Another evidence of wealth was the progress of insurance companies. The growth of commerce after 1820 brought an expansion in marine insurance, for, as commodities increased in quantity and value, the amount to be covered by insurance expanded in the same proportion. In 1835, there were 13 marine insurance companies in New York City, with a capital of \$4,500,000, and 29 fire insurance companies capitalized at \$10,-

250,000. Life insurance was of more recent origin in New York State, but in that year its one company had life liabilities amounting to nearly \$2,000,000. By 1850, there were 4 life insurance companies and 55 stock and mutual companies, capitalized at \$15,500,000, incorporated in the state and doing a fire and marine business. In addition, there were some 577 agencies of 39 foreign insurance companies doing business in the state, 207 of which represented 10 life insurance companies. It was estimated by the state comptroller that the people of the state paid over \$500,000 in premiums that year to foreign life insurance companies. This extension of life insurance throughout the state gives ample evidence of the thrift of its people.

The increase in the value of property gives still another evidence of the increase in wealth. In 1842, the assessed valuation of real estate in New York State was estimated at \$504,000,000, or double what it was in 1828; and in New York City it more than doubled. Personal property also increased at the same ratio. The increase in wealth was so extensive that by 1850 New York possessed one-seventh of the true valuation of the property of the whole country, a figure over \$1,080,000,000, which was 48 per cent greater than that of Pennsylvania and 88 per cent greater than that of Massachusetts. Its per capita wealth was nearly \$350, as against \$312 for Pennsylvania. This period saw the accumulation of great fortunes; in 1820, there were only 102 men in New York City whose personal property assessment was over \$20,000, while twenty-five years later the list of property owners contained several hundred names whose resources were valued at over \$100,000. John J. Astor led the list, with a fortune estimated at between \$25,000,000 and \$50,000,000.

The state's investments in internal improvements had put it heavily in debt, but it maintained sound credit both at home and abroad. In 1842, the debt had grown to \$25,000,000, nearly four-fifths of which represented its interest in canals;

although in the same year the canals were so productive that they yielded an amount more than the interest of the whole debt of the state. During the next decade, New York reduced its debt by over \$2,000,000. Pennsylvania's debt at the same time was double that of New York.

### SOCIAL ADVANCE

The growth of the state in material welfare was supplemented by a broadening in its social and cultural development. Gradually a higher plane of thought and living had been advocated, and, by the middle of the century, the majority of the people were better housed and had many domestic conveniences. For the average family, living was decidedly above what was necessary to existence. Food was plentiful, and on festive occasions it was choice in quality. But in the matter of food and clothes, changes were rather in the nature of fashions than in methods. Dress had become less distinguishing as a class indication, though it still marked city or country origin. The women of the larger cities followed closely the changes of fashion, for which they looked to Europe. To a more considerable degree, the men could be more easily classed socially by the attention given to their toilet. In the country areas, dress was adequate for service and protection, and included a "best" outfit for Sunday use.

Class distinctions during the period became less obvious than in earlier days, but did not entirely disappear. The aristocracy of old families had been severely shaken and, with the spread of democracy, it became to some extent amalgamated with the rising money class. In fact, aristocracy became an open caste, and, like the presidency and a fortune, it was theoretically within everyone's reach. The period had seen the rise of a permanent wage-earning class, which already had made itself felt in its demand for social and political rights.

One of the very marked changes was evidenced in the construction of houses and in their conveniences. Temporary structures in the country had given way in general to comfortable frame houses. In the larger cities, brick and stone buildings, closely set together, were being constructed in rows. Fifth Avenue, in New York City, was becoming the fashionable street, and on it were built the brownstone-front houses, all alike on the outside. Inside city houses, new comforts were enjoyed. By 1842, water from the Croton River project had been introduced into New York City. The running of water out of faucets from city mains and the drainage of sewage into central systems were among the most important changes in living conditions. For those who could afford it, came the blessings of indoor toilets and baths. Gas had been first introduced in the metropolis in 1823, and by 1850 its use was common inside buildings and for street lighting. In the country, oil lamps furnished illumination. Brimstone matches had come into use in 1836, affording a great convenience over primitive methods of striking a light, and very soon they were in almost universal use. Changes had taken place in kitchen utensils, with the adoption of tin goods. Carpets became more and more common as they were substituted for rag rugs in homes and public rooms. A basic change occurred with regard to domestic heating. Iron ranges took the place of fireplaces for cooking, and many varieties of heating stoves were created. In churches and public buildings, large stoves were employed, and soon these began to be transferred to the cellars, thus heating the auditoriums indirectly. By 1850, practicable furnaces were on the market, and some of the wealthy began to install them in their houses.

The improvement in transportation methods had made travel common. Roads of all kinds had improved remarkably, and canal packets and stagecoaches had given way to the faster service of the railroad. Over 4,500,000 passengers were carried on

the railroads within the state in the single year 1850. The fare from Buffalo to Albany was reduced from \$20 to \$6.15 in 1853, and similarly on other routes. Excellent travel accommodations were available on river, lake and ocean steamers. The effect of this easier communication between the communities of the state was the breaking down of provincialism. About the middle of the forties, foreign travel for pleasure began for the well-to-do. By 1850, vacation resorts, such as Saratoga and fashionable places along the Hudson River, were frequented by no inconsiderable portion of the population, and summer outings, with trunks of increasing number and size, had become a feature of travel and a spectacular display of fashions.

Another significant advance during the period was in the perfection of the post office. Up to 1845, there had been little change in rates. It cost 6 cents to send a letter of one sheet 30 miles, 10 cents up to 80 miles, and 25 cents for 400 miles. If the letter had two, three or four sheets the price was doubled, trebled, or quadrupled. Drop letters and newspapers in the state cost one cent. In 1845, a great change came. Letters of half an ounce were carried 300 miles for 5 cents, and beyond that the cost was doubled. Newspapers were carried free 30 miles, 100 miles for one cent, and beyond that for  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent more. In 1851, the rate for a letter was reduced to 3 cents for 3,000 miles. By 1847, postage stamps had come into use.

The recreations of the people depended largely on the locality and on their position in life. In the country, the logrolling and the barn-raising began to disappear, though the party and the dance which had accompanied them remained. Church socials and annual fairs were important occasions of social intercourse. On the whole, there was less disapproval of amusement. Through the rich farming districts traveled not only more peddlers, but more circuses. By 1850, P. T. Barnum was riding the crest of the wave as the showman of the age. His museum in New York

City was as successful and infinitely more amusing than the decorous museum of Madame Tussaud in London. By many, the theater was still frowned upon, but on the whole it gained in standing. Yachting was a pastime for some of the wealthy, and horse racing attracted much attention. During the forties, society resorted increasingly to display, and the balls held in New York City created a sensation.

Increased wealth, a higher intelligence, and a better social plane had their moral effects. In 1850, there were 5,000 churches and about 4,500 ministers. The Roman Catholics had the largest number of the 703,000 church members, and then in order came Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Reformed Protestants, and Dutch Reformed, with a number of smaller sects. These organizations, with their private schools and institutions of charity, were a powerful factor in the advance of the people. Homes for the sick, orphaned, blind, deaf and dumb, insane, aged, and other unfortunates had been built in various sections and endowed by the benevolent rich. In 1850, there were 10,280 criminals and 60,000 paupers supported at an annual cost of \$818,000. New York State was a leader in prison reform, and county poorhouses were reorganized and conducted on improved principles.

### CULTURAL PROGRESS

During the period, definite trends were evidenced in the cultural development of the people. With regard to popular education, New York was entitled to primacy in two respects—the genesis of its common schools, and their supervision by the state. Under Gideon Hawley, superintendent of common schools until 1821, when for the next thirty years the office was merged with that of secretary of state, the schools had been brought under a responsible head. From 1813 to 1821, the

number of pupils had increased from 140,000 to 304,000, and the aid furnished by the state had defrayed the expenses of the schools for about three months in the year. There had been an earnest effort to make the schools free to all children, but the matter was a source of bitter controversy in the legislature for some years. In 1848, about a quarter of all the schools were free and these were mostly in large communities. By 1850, the school districts numbered 13,842, over twice as many as were reported in 1821; and 726,291 pupils were given instruction. The wages paid teachers amounted to \$1,240,258, of which only \$136,949 was from rate bills, while the total amount expended for schools by the state was \$1,600,000. The following year, a free-school law was passed by the legislature, but this proved difficult to enforce. Education by the state, however, had become a clear duty, and not a begrudged act of charity. But the extension of the free public school, up through the high school to the college, was yet to be worked out. The middle of the century saw the operation of a normal school by the state, the functioning of teacher-training departments in designated academies, and the establishment of teachers' institutes. A few years later, the schools of New York City came under the general school act. Under the Regents of the University of the State of New York, academies and colleges had been nourished. From 8 in 1800, academies were multiplied to 30 in 1820, to 127 in 1840, and to 204 in 1850. In the latter year, the attendance was 31,580, while ten years before it had been only 10,881. Aid to the academies was not comparable with that given to common schools, for between 1835 and 1850 the state granted only \$42,441, a sum equal to the amount raised by the academies. Even then, the aid given by New York was more generous than that given by any other state. A large number of private schools were also in existence, with thousands of pupils in attendance. At the same time, New York had 8 colleges, 7 theological schools, 4 medical schools,



and one law school, instructing a total of 1,832 students. The largest number of students was in attendance at the colleges, and the next largest at the medical schools. Only one other state, Pennsylvania, registered more students in these institutions of higher learning.

One of the evidences of progress in general intelligence is seen in the increase of reading matter and the rise of the early literary masters. These were the days when the Knickerbocker school brought independence and reputation to our literature, when Irving worked the rich mine of Hudson River traditions, and Cooper utilized his early experience on the frontier to write his "Leatherstocking Tales." Among the poets who lived and wrote in New York were Paulding, Halleck, Willis and Woodworth. Some of Poe's best work had been done here, and William Cullen Bryant had made New York his home, as editor of the New York *Evening Post*. Surely these representatives of New York's writers contributed much to the literary glory of their native land, and for a time more than their New England contemporaries.

In the field of the newspaper and periodical press, Pennsylvania outdistanced New York until well past the first quarter of the century. But by 1840, the publications of this state numbered far more than those of any other. In 1850, there were 428 newspapers and periodicals, with an aggregate annual circulation of over 115,000,000 copies, while Pennsylvania had 310 news establishments with a total yearly circulation of 84,000,000 copies. The character of New York's press may be classified as political, independent, literary, religious and scientific—publications being most numerous in that order. In each of these types, the publications of New York were more numerous than those of any other state, with the exception of the scientific press, which in Massachusetts was slightly in the lead. Of the total annual press circulation in the entire country, New York

State had a fourth. Out of the "tinselly beginning" which characterized the field of our lighter literature came the production of a serious literary magazine in New York City, when *Harper's Magazine* was offered to the public in 1847. This periodical began to publish a good class of literary work, which was to stand the test of time. The market for good literature was much larger, more varied and active than previously, although not sufficient to support many authors in more than moderate comfort. Whereas the preceding generation had, for the most part, ordered its books from England and France, American publishers, such as Harper and Brothers and D. Appleton, were now publishing not only American but foreign works.

Libraries furnish still another evidence of the state's enlightenment. By 1850, there were 11,013 libraries of all kinds, with 1,760,000 volumes, representing 1,000,000 more volumes than the libraries of Massachusetts. It was the 10,802 school district libraries, containing over 1,300,000 volumes, that gave New York its ascendancy. There were only 43 public libraries in the state, but their total number of volumes was surpassed only by those of the public libraries of Massachusetts. There were also 25 college libraries, 137 Sunday school libraries, and 6 church libraries. The State Library, founded in 1818, developed rapidly after 1844, when Dr. T. Romeyn Beck took over its supervision under the direction of the Regents. In 1844, it contained 10,000 volumes, which number was increased to 53,000 during the next fifteen years. In 1850, there existed also many private libraries, and about this time rich men began to devote large sums to founding libraries and to erecting buildings.

By the middle of the century, New York City had succeeded in establishing itself as the principal art center of the nation. As early as 1828, its growing interest in painting was attested by the formation of the National Academy of Design. Character-

istic of the period was the group of painters known as the "Hudson River School," who sought to put on canvas the beauties of the American landscape, then appreciated for the first time.

In 1847, New York City society sought to consolidate its position as the metropolitan aristocracy of a democratic country by organizing opera on rather an elaborate scale. While the venture failed, it proved to be an important step in naturalizing this expensive art. Previous to this attempt, foreign and English operas intermittently entertained New York society with varying success. Choral associations, however, developed successfully during the period, and in 1850 several of them were united to form the New York Harmonic Society, which presented oratorios with great success. Its rendition of the "Messiah" in 1850, when Jenny Lind sang the soprano solos, was an event long to be remembered.

#### POLITICAL CHANGES

Politically, New York had traveled far along the road to democracy. Reform had been the slogan of the times, and its stronghold was in the new counties of the western and northern parts of the state. The agitation for the extension of the franchise was particularly significant during the period, culminating in the inclusion of all adult white males in the twenties. A source of bitter feeling throughout the period was evidenced in the fight to abolish feudal tenures. From the dawn of statehood to the year 1846, many tenant farmers could get no title to their land, but had to pay rent or its equivalent to the proprietor. Several times during the period, efforts were made to relieve the difficulty, but with little success. With the adoption of the constitution of 1846, the great landholders lost control, and provisions as to the land law became clear and wholesome.

Another significant democratic change was in the election of officials. A first step had been made in the abolition of the Council of Appointment and the Council of Revision, by the constitution of 1821. While the "Albany Regency" acquired much the same power, the move, nevertheless, contributed to the transfer of the appointing power to the people. The revision of the constitution again in 1846 made the principal executive and judicial officers elective by popular vote. To extend the government more directly to the people, the legislators were chosen by separate districts, so that each district could have direct representation. The new constitution also restricted the power of the legislature by forbidding it to pass special legislation of various kinds. That the people of the state were pleased with the solution of these problems embodied in the constitution of 1846, is shown by the majority of more than two to one which it received when submitted to popular vote. It remained in effect nearly half a century.

If Virginia in early days was "the mother of Presidents," New York became, by the strong character of its political leaders and by its large population, "the pivotal state" in presidential elections, and so remained almost without interruption from the days of Jackson. After the termination of the Virginia regency, both political parties constantly turned to New York for the selection of candidates on the presidential and vice-presidential tickets. By 1850, two of its sons had been seated in the presidential chair, five had been vice presidents, and many of the most important cabinet officers, from the time of Hamilton, had been New Yorkers. Its senators and representatives were leaders of intelligence and patriotism.

At the middle of the nineteenth century, New York had become the Empire State in name and in fact. Its primacy in agriculture and in manufacturing was uncontested. It handled over half the nation's commerce. It possessed a seventh of the

wealth of the entire country. The achievements wrought within its bounds were those of a definite growing human group working out its own destinies. Its people had a higher standard of living; methods of transportation and communication had improved remarkably; luxuries had been turned into necessities; public institutions had multiplied; and government had been brought closer to the people. The material and cultural inheritance now represented a substantial accumulation.

As early as 1819, New York had been referred to as the Empire State, when it wrested the leadership in point of population from Virginia. And on January 8, 1822, the editor of the New York *Spectator* remarked: "The internal concerns of New York extensive as it is in its territory, and with new resources unfolding themselves to public view, appear like those of a mighty and flourishing empire." Washington, with prophetic vision, had so characterized the prospects of the state forty years before, when he referred to the area as "the Seat of Empire." By the time the Grand Canal had demonstrated its effectiveness in tapping the resources of the West and bringing them to New York, the name Empire State was universally acknowledged and accepted.

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CHAMPLAIN DISCOVERS THE LAKE

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BATTLE OF SARATOGA 1777

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